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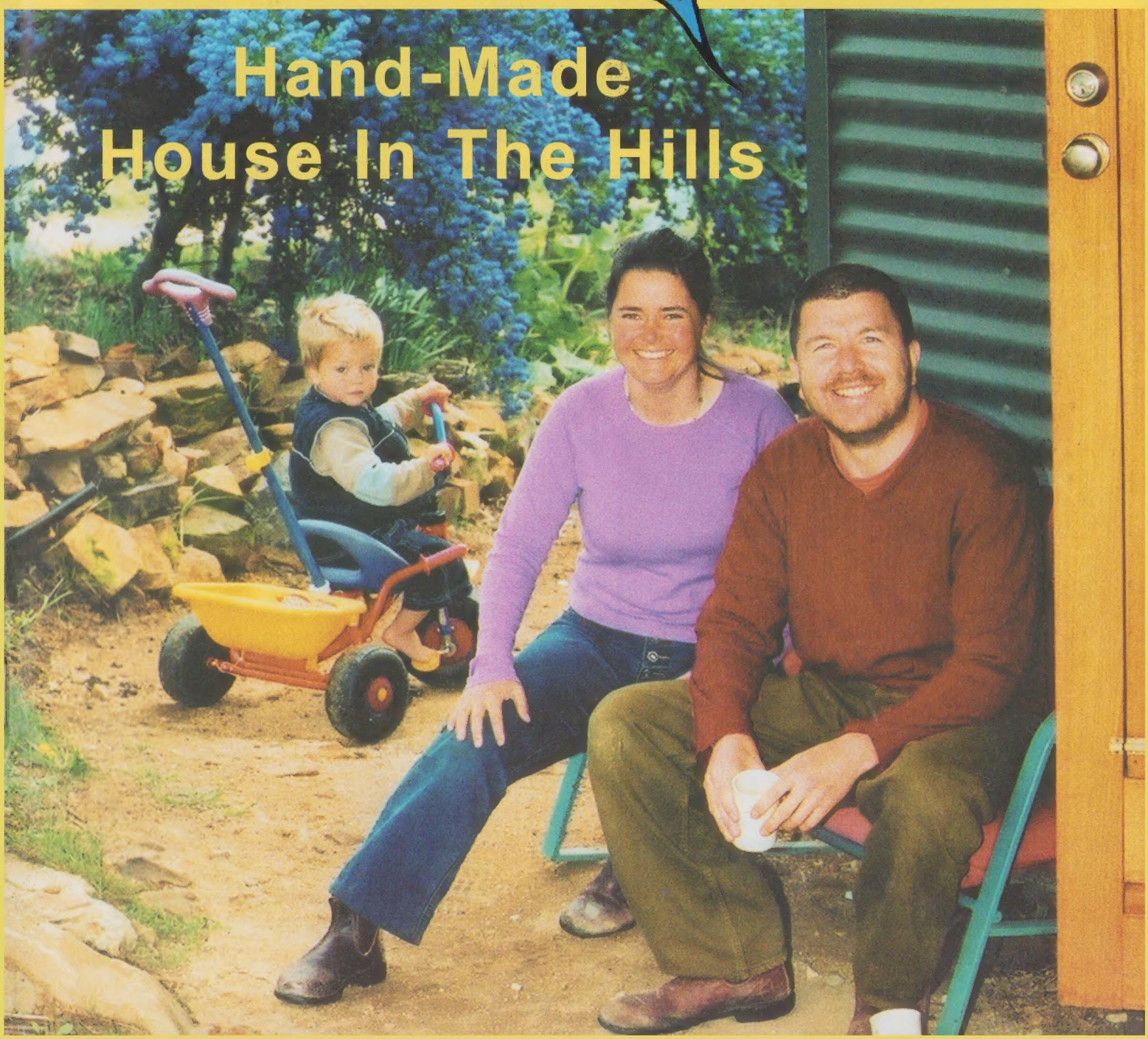

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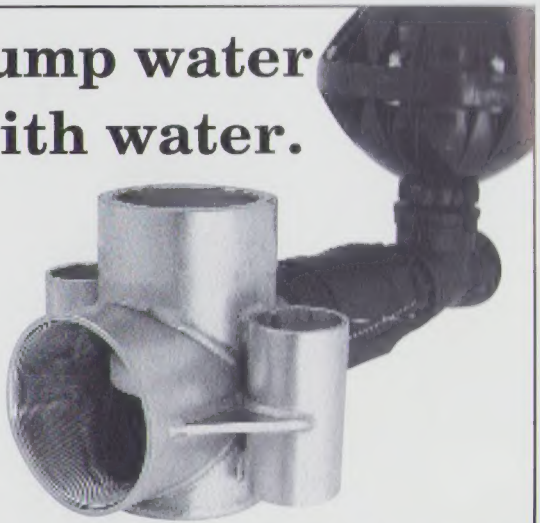

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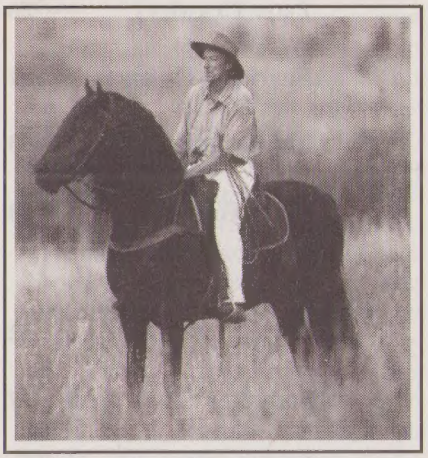

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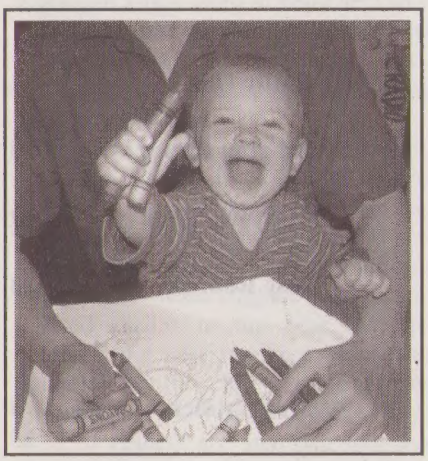

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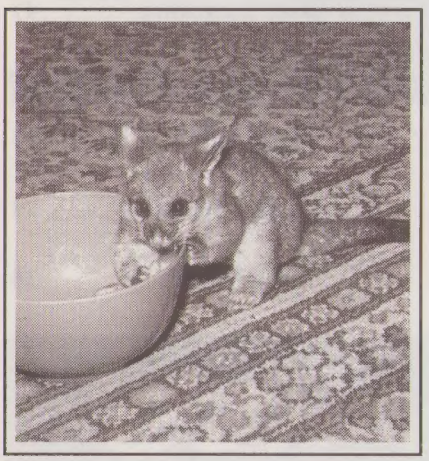

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Front & Back Cover: Leone and Shaun's handmade home. Photos by Marcel Aucar.

Edited by Megg Miller and Mary Horsfall.

Published by Grass Roots Publishing Pty Ltd, Box 117, Seymour 3661. Ph: 03-5792-4000, fax: 03-5792-4222. For classifieds see page 75.

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GUMNUT GOSSIP

by Megg Miller.

The world might be changing at an alarming rate, but it's reassuring to realise that lots of people have fruit trees in their backyard and grow a few vegies. While at the supermarket this morning I stopped to look at apples offered for $1.99 a kilo, a give-away if ever there was. A fellow shopper recommended them, commenting on their crispness, but speculating that they were imported. 'I've got an apple tree in my backyard', he said, 'a Pink Lady, and it hasn't got fruit on it yet. Makes you think, doesn't it?' In the end we agreed they'd probably come from cold storage, but I was impressed by his interest in what he was buying and awareness of the state of the apple tree back home. He wore a navy singlet and displayed a fine array of body art and I pinched myself for falling into the trap of assuming that fruit and vegie growers all sported beards and hand-spun hand-knitted vests.

Gardening reaches out to all ages and all walks of life. GR readers are especially keen; we know this from the many and varied growing articles we receive and from the Feedback letters. Clive Blazey from Diggers Seeds commented earlier in the year that he received the best response from GR compared with other magazines he advertises in and would we know why. Well, if readers are anything like the team at GR, it's because they love their gardens and get such a kick out of seeing herbs and plants prosper and harvesting their own food. The readers of other magazines may think about gardening, but GR people get into it and get their hands dirty.

You may have read the helpful article last issue, 'Rural Water Supplies'. Just after the magazine went on sale we received a note saying that author Derek Collin was ill in a hospice in Brisbane battling cancer, but was very pleased to see the first part of his article in print. He had been watching out for it and we were really relieved our timing was right. Just a few days after responding to the note from Vivienne, a friend of Derek's, we learnt he had passed away. The concluding part of his article has been included this issue, sadly posthumously, but he was keen to share this information with readers. We offer condolences to his family and friend Vivienne. 'The friendship had its beginnings in *Grass Roots*. We met through an advert I had placed in it seven years ago and have been friends since', wrote Vivienne. GR has contributed in many ways to such a wide range of people and we feel quite honoured to have played a role in initiating a rich and warm friendship between two readers and to be able to say, 'Farewell friend, the journey ahead beckons'.

An utterly delightful note a week or so back apologised for forgetting to update the address of a subscription going to County Tipperary in Ireland. Our writer Noelene said she wasn't sure what part GR had played in motivating and helping the subscription recipient, Brett, build his own home, but he had designed and contracted it out and even inveigled the contractors into teaching him each step of the construction. 'He struggled at times to do it the Irish way', Noelene said. 'It is raining much of the time and there is no such thing as downing tools and waiting for the sun to shine. You keep on working despite rain day after day. We've had a pic emailed showing a celebratory handstand at the completion of chimney and flooring on the upper floor – and the sun actually visible and glorious. I'm so chuffed some of my "alternate" seems to have had such an impact. I love my GRs and on my last visit saw his copies with numerous markers and was thrilled they were so helpful.' Ah, doesn't that all sound great, except for the incessant rain. We're running bets that Brett is Noelene's son. How pleasing it must be to know your offspring is prepared to get down to and learn the basics in order to achieve their dream.

There is plenty of basic info in this issue for Brett, Noelene and all of us, whether it's choosing trees for your land, planning a simple house, choosing a generator, or just putting you in the mood to prepare for Christmas. The focus in most households is likely to be on stretching the dollar and keeping celebrations and gift giving to a realistic level. We've tried hard to come up with a few gift ideas and decorations that won't leave you poor, as well as healthy tasty food alternatives. If they don't appeal, check your back copies, we've probably covered as many Christmas ideas in our time as Santa. Of course, we feel privileged in being able to offer readers how-to details of making a recycled pantyhose Christmas angel. Marjorie Bligh has presented it in a natural shade, but you may wish to make it special and use silver or coloured hose. You wouldn't find an item like that anywhere else but in *Grass Roots*, would you?

We're very appreciative of the effort contributors go to and for sharing their knowledge and expertise. And we love the wonderful ideas many come up with, especially those that are refreshingly different and unusual. We all benefit from the diverse range of talented and highly individual writers and readers.

Sometimes, when looking through the magazine or reading a story I'll stop and think, I wonder what their place is like? This especially applies to recycling articles. You can just bet there will be stuff everywhere with shelves piled high and sheds overflowing. Onsite 'resource centres' do tend to become untidy, but a messy place surely isn't important in the big scheme of things. That thought brings comfort to me and you know already from the odd comments made that my office could be mistaken for a recycling centre. I'm messy and so is my handwriting, so it wasn't a surprise to get a store loyalty card recently in the name of Mess Miller. The team have found it highly amusing and derived more enjoyment from it than I'd like.

So, Mess Miller and the tidy team, Mary, Sue, Suni and David, wish you all a happy festive season and lots of creative ideas that you can later share for breathing new life into the cards, wrapping paper and containers that overwhelm us all in December. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Home On The Hill

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Your own home built how you want it for $32,000? Impossible, you may think, but that's exactly what one young couple with a commitment to the environment have achieved.

Leone and Shaun have chosen a very simple life and have found it more enriching for their family and creative energies. Leone, an artist, illustrator and full-time mum, and Shaun, a social worker and primal therapist, live with small son Stohm on 165 acres at Highlands in central Victoria. Unsuited to farming, the acreage is a place roos, wombats and koalas can call home. It reached out to Leone and Shaun when they first saw it: 'We loved the hills, the rocks, the diversity of the land and the isolation. Its position in relation to Melbourne was great, and to local towns and the train', Leone said.

'The land just spoke to our heart. We had a checklist, but it seemed irrelevant. The property carried three seasonal creeks, a dam, flat bits, hills, hidden valleys between spurs, centuries old grandparent trees, a waterfall, a magic rock pool, lovely dells, granite, ironstone and vegetation like candlebarks, blue gums, peppermints, a few red box, messmate, tea tree and some tree ferns. This diversity was the single most "yes" factor. We both had huge smiles and bubbled with excitement. Giving ourselves and the land three days grace, we asked the land to consider if it wanted us, knowing we were novices at rural living', said Leone.

They returned three days later and found more amazing places. 'It was a big "yes". All we can give this land is ourselves. We're not farmers and as the land is feral and not suited for grazing we feel it's okay to make it a place for wildlife.'

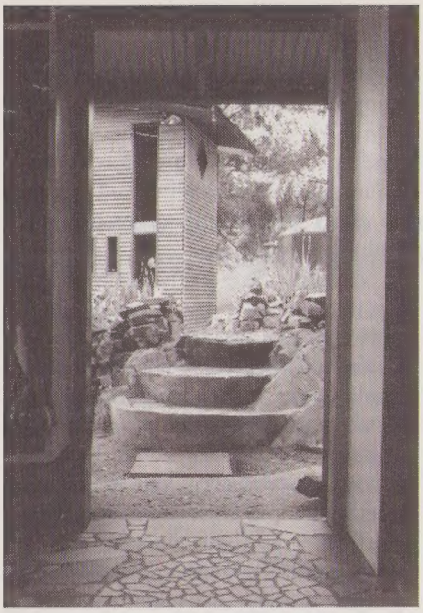
THE FIRST DWELLING

The couple put up a shack 2.5 x 5 metres with a verandah the same size so they had accommodation for weekends. It was a good learning experience. They used second-hand timber and found it hard to work with, so when house plans and materials were discussed they knew pine would be more manageable. The shack also taught them first-hand about their land. 'Our verandah faced west and we were forever collecting things blown down the hill, even our futon (we enjoyed sleeping outside). A northern verandah would have been more suitable and an east one for shade in summer', said Shaun.

Building the shack also sorted out who was good at what. Leone had enjoyed numerous cubby houses as a child and built a tree house in Lismore, so knew she was fine with heights and preferred hand tools. Electrical saws were Shaun's department, though Leone did use the electric drill. With some experience behind them, they felt well able to decide what they wanted in a house.

PLANNING

'We felt less is more, and I favour small, intimate spaces and multi-functional possibilities', Leone said. 'Big



spaces remind me of my smallness, but smaller ones strengthen me and encourage me to grow. We wanted to use all the space and for areas to flow, be easy to build and maintain and, of course, be affordable.'

They looked at mudbrick, cob and strawbale, but with the limited period of Shaun's uni holidays to complete the house, had to place the time factor as a priority. They realised they were not good at upkeep, so chose corrugated iron because it's quick and easy to use and maintain, is lightweight, looks beautiful and there is flexibility in the roof line. They confess they came up with lots of way-out ideas, hardly surprising as they both love talking about architecture and Leone is an experienced sculptor so had definite thoughts about how space and materials should relate. After discussions Leone would draw up plans and then talk with a neighbour who was a builder and a great help to the couple in 'getting real'.

Deciding what the house should include was based on hands-on research. 'We checked out houses wherever we went, noting what inspired us and questioning established notions. For example, why did a bedroom have to be so big? We created a bed nest, a room basically as big as our bed. We thought a lot about how our home would work as we didn't want wasted spaces. The bathroom was tricky, Shaun likes big, I like small, so we were faced with accommodating both our wants. We also checked passive solar principles, wind, sun and seasonal space use inside and outside', said Leone.

'We had to work within the restrictions of the shire and personal ones like budget and the location. We were feeling our way and to make it easy settled on a simple design. There was also the thought that maybe it should be resaleable. If we built again I'd go for what we wanted and be bolder in the design.'

A SIMPLE HOUSE

The home has 5 x 8 metres of living space plus a mezzanine level that provides another 3 x 5 metres. Because the house isn't on mains power, natural light was important so there are lots of windows. 'It's almost like being outside, which is great, but as they're mostly floor to ceiling it's been stressful with a toddler. We have louvres because they're easy to clean and birds don't fly into them, but can fly out if they get into the house. We used second-hand ill-fitting glass and there's a permanent draft, which annoys Shaun in winter. Get good ones if permanent air conditioning worries you', advised Leone.

The north double doors were made by Shaun, with Matt the neighbouring builder, while the east one was scavenged off the roadside in Melbourne. A concrete slab was poured for the floor because of its passive solar attributes. Shaun was keen to colour the concrete so they could use it without further work, but in the end broken terracotta tiles (nonslip) that were free from a brick works were laid as a mosaic. 'I think I'd go for cement with rocks thrown on top and cut and polished next time', Leone said.

Heating comes from a Scandia wood stove, a locally made unit, with a Solahart hot water system. The stove is fantastic for cooking, the oven's easy to operate and it's low maintenance. Leone enjoys baking and says she 'cooks' the nappies on the stove in winter to save the hot water for showering. The warm air in the mezzanine is ideal for drying them when it's raining. A two-ring gas barbecue stove complements the wood stove and is handy in summer.

Water, of course, comes off the roof and into the main tank near the house. Because they didn't want to spoil the roofline with a header tank, it's a north facing 'protuberance' and has proved to be inconvenient. Leone and Shaun are careful with water; two years carrying buckets for the toilet made them water conscious. Water from the tank goes into a tub in the sink and is recycled onto the garden in dry times and water from showers and nappies is also saved and reused. At present washing is done in town at the laundromat. The toilet, a Rota-loo, is outside, something that pleases Leone in particular as she

loves noticing the stars at night or the mist in the morning en route to the loo. How does the family cope without mains power or an alternative system? The house was wired when it was built in case they wanted to get a power system later on, but for now they manage with candles at night, enjoying the soft yellow light they create and going to bed early. 'Candles are simple and inexpensive and we don't have bills to worry about. We do pay for the gas for the gas rings, but that's not expensive. I find now I'm sensitive to the sounds of electrical appliances', Leone said. They don't have a fridge, so buy more regularly in summer. With fresh vegies from the garden, powdered milk, simple meals and no ice cream, they've successfully lived without a fridge for years. 'I don't miss the smells, the noise or the cleaning', said Leone.

A generator was purchased, a Honda 1000-watt, so they could use the computer. It had an inverter, so power was suitable for computers and was invaluable during building to run drills and the circular saw. They burnt the rings out overloading it, so purchased a Gentech 2.5 KVA, which runs the computer fine, but is noisy and uses more fuel. 'It's more practical for running grinders and drop-saws', Shaun said. They run the laptop off a car battery, which is hooked up to the car and charged while driving. The printer and scanner are run off the generator.

In such a small house, what do Leone and Shaun do for storage? 'Having less makes for an easier life', said Leone. 'I chuck things out often, following the rule if we don't use it let it go so someone else can. After starting off in the shack the house seems big, and we do spend lots of time outside, so don't suffer a crowded-in feeling. The place is quick to clean up and having few gadgets makes for creativity. Surprisingly, we don't utilise the space in the mezzanine and it becomes the mess collector. I try not to hang onto stuff to store, it goes to the op shop when we're finished, and I've probably bought it from there in the beginning. Hanging onto stuff becomes a burden and my bit for the environment is to reuse rather than use new.'

OTHER CONSTRUCTIONS

Pleased with their success on the house, Shaun and Leone have built a workshed and are now erecting a studio, mainly from second-hand timber and corrugated iron, and separated from the house by the vegie garden. 'The studio will get my painting out of the kitchen and I like to have a space all of my own that reflects just me. I paint and sculpt in bronze, metal and wood and enjoy writing, so it will be well used', Leone said.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

'Our community revolves around the small primary school, hall, CFA and Landcare, and we have dances and events. I feel blessed. People are keen to join groups; we have a walking group, a writing group and host an annual art exhibition. Shaun is involved in a theatrical group, Stohm and I go to a roving playgroup. Anything can happen up here and I enjoy and cherish the diverse community. I've got to meet and know all types of people with different ideas, values, beliefs and gifts, and we were so well supported when we had Stohm', said Leone.

'All this offers a sense of belonging, practical support for a young family, advice when I ask. If there's something I want to learn, there will be someone who knows. I'm learning to knit socks from our near neighbours, one of whom is 90!'

Shaun and Leone say they started meeting people when they attended the local hall's periodic working bees and attending different group activities and events. 'Slowly we've met most of the people who live in the area, forming friendships and networks', said Shaun.

FINAL THOUGHTS

While the lifestyle Leone and Shaun have created for themselves and their son is simpler than the way most GR readers live, it's been carefully thought out to meet this family's needs. Both parents want to give Stohm a childhood that provides life skills like resilience, self-reliance, creativity and a connection with the bush. Leone hopes living simply will show him how little is needed to be happy. Time with their son is the best gift both parents feel they can give. They also believe it's important to find the balance between what they want and need and what they can do for the environment and for climate change. For example, they've chosen not to have a second car and they use cloth nappies instead of disposables. 'It's the little things that make changes', Leone said.

Their advice to GR readers dreaming of a house of their own? 'Have a deep look at how you live, what you like, what you need in your life and what nourishes you and what doesn't. Chuck out ideas, objects and habits that deplete you. Work out what's important to you. Slow down, live within your means and don't work so hard. Play more. It's all about finding balance.'

Leone and Shaun can be contacted on shaun@primaltherapy.com.au

Photos by Marcel Aucar.

A Plot For The Future

by Ken Moore, Glamorgan Vale, Qld.

Growing trees not only provides environmental benefits, planting them to harvest for their future timber gives the additional advantage of producing an income years later.

My wife and I bought a hobby farm of 40 hectares in south-east Queensland in late 2001. The house sits on a bare ridge that is very exposed to the westerly sun and winds. We decided to plant that side to trees, including a small forestry plot.

ASSESSMENT AND INFORMATION

As with any enterprise, the first stage is to gain knowledge and do the planning. We had a lot to learn, but fortunately there is a lot of information available. After all, we told ourselves, Australians have been planting trees and using native timbers for 200 years. Many would say there's been too much using and not enough planting!

We started by assessing what our plot had to offer, and its drawbacks. Critical elements are soil, rainfall, drainage and frosts. After some digging in the plot, looking at rainfall records and talking to the neighbours, we decided that our plot had heavy clay soil, was not subject to frosts, had good drainage and experienced about 800 millimetres of rain per year. In addition, it was windy and exposed. We decided against paying to have our soil analysed.

Then we started the information search with two aims: to find the best timber species to grow on our patch, and how to grow them (silvicultural techniques). Our starting point was the Queensland State Forestry Department. There we found a good library with many publications on sale and technical notes on forestry, and we bought our best publication, a small book on tree species. We also obtained information about joint-venture schemes between Forestry and landowners. We decided we wanted to do our own thing and, in any case, our plot was far too small for a joint venture.

We also went on three organised tours (half to full day) of tree planting, forestry plots and wood lots. These proved very informative, especially in relation to species growing in our area.

Finally, the internet has a lot of information about trees. I found it most valuable in looking at those species that we had short-listed for consideration, rather than wading through thousands of entries on 'timber trees', 'eucalypts', 'cabinet timbers' or similar.

CHOICES

As we had ruled out trees for pulp, a final consideration before deciding on the species to plant should have been the market value of timber (poles, structural timber and cabinet timber) in

30 years or so. We decided that this was far too difficult, except for a vague thought that cabinet timber should become relatively more valuable and that we should have some of it. We did, however, take into consideration the appearance of the tree, such as an attractive white trunk.

Then the decisions! We knew we didn't want to plant a monoculture and decided on a mixture of mainly eucalypts: *Eucalyptus argophloia* (western white gum), *E. camaldulensis* (river red gum), *E. citriodora* (lemon-scented gum) and *E. moluccana* (grey box). We also wanted to try a few cabinet timbers and chose: *Grevillea robusta* (silky oak), *Araucaria cunninghamii* (hoop pine) and *Agathis robusta* (Queensland kauri pine).

We purchased about 120 plants, and tried to make sure that their provenance (the locality from which the seed came) was as local as possible. They went into the ground in early 2002, and were three years old in March 2005.

PLANTING

I had decided not to use any chemicals as fertiliser or for weed control, and to try to get every plant to develop into a decent timber tree by early pruning and shaping. We decided against the usual silvicultural practice of planting thickly and thinning progressively over the decades as this seemed too wasteful of trees in a small plot.

Each row was pegged out and a 60-centimetre-diameter patch of grass was cleared by hand at each peg. No attempt was made to control grass elsewhere. Each tree was planted with a few handfuls of mature cow dung incorporated in the planting hole. Then the cleared grass was used as mulch around the plant, and it was watered. Spacings vary a bit, but average six metres in the rows and seven metres between rows.

The balance of the area (about 40 percent) was planted with some smaller amenity trees. The whole area was permanently fenced to keep out the cattle, but I will be able to let them in after a few more years. Costs have been recorded for future capital gains tax purposes.

MAINTENANCE

Our planting project was followed by three years of dry weather and I had to hand-water every fortnight or I would have lost the lot! During that period growth seemed painfully slow. In the timber plot about 10 percent died and were replaced. Hares ate off five trees before I realised what was happening. I noticed that hare attack occurred in the naturally bare areas and not in the grassed areas. I put guards around 15 trees in the relevant area and that solved the problem. I have also staked about 20 trees because of their wind exposure.

After three years the timber trees range in height from 1.5 metres to over 4 metres, with the average height being about 2.5 metres. The cabinet timbers have been the slower growers. I have started to prune the bottoms of the taller trees and to prune any double-header trees. I continue to mulch some of the smaller trees, but no longer water them.

Most trees are at a height where they are attracting birds. Small wrens and finches now flit among the branches and quail scurry over the ground.

EVALUATION

Mistakes? For such a small timber plot, I probably planted too many species, two or three would have been enough to avoid a monoculture. On reflection, I don't think we put enough effort into the difficult marketing issue. The grass is a fire danger, but I think it is impractical to clear it without herbicides. As the canopy closes over and cattle are allowed in to graze, that risk will decrease.

Forestry is a very long-term venture. Even if they fail as timber trees, I'm sure I'll have a lot of pleasure in watching the growth of my own little arboretum, wildlife habitat, windbreak and carbon sink.

Useful Reference

Trees and Shrubs, Queensland DPI, 1995.

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Chic, Cheap Gift Wrapping

by Emily Hill, Brunswick, V

I'm a dedicated GR recycler, but when it comes to Christmas I like the presents under the tree to follow a coordinated colour scheme. It looks so much nicer when they are all matching. Remember, just because you are a little cheap, it doesn't mean you can't be chic.

MATERIALS

I'm proud to say I've never had to buy Chrissie wrapping. I use recycled wrapping paper, newspaper, cheap brown parcel wrap, accessories like recycled ribbon, silver paint and plain and coloured string, and found objects like leaves and gumnuts.

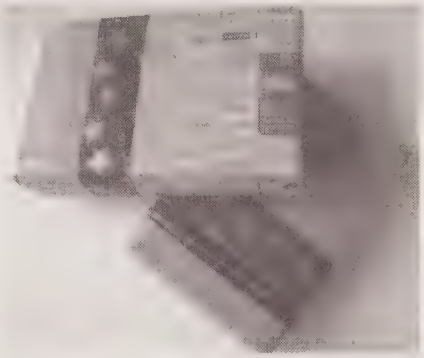
WRAPPING METHOD

I keep all the wrapping from the gifts we receive. You can just pop it in a bag and wait for next year, but I like to take time out on Boxing Day and do it properly. I carefully peel any sticky tape off and then iron the wrapping. I confess I'm not so keen on ironing my clothes. I fold the pieces into similar sizes and store them with some rosemary and lavender sprigs. When the next year rolls around my recycled wrapping is in mint condition, smells delightful and every centimetre can be used.

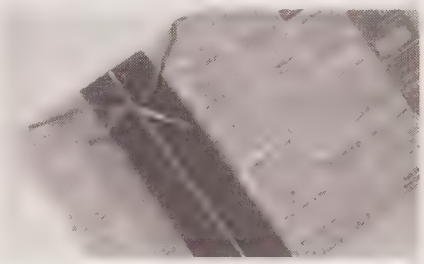
In December each year I choose my colour theme and sort all the paper I have stored according to whether I can use it this time. Red and green is a pretty all-encompassing theme, but I usually choose one or the other as the dominant colour, say red, and then just accessorise with green and silver or gold.

For the main wrapping paper, I use either parcel wrap or newspaper. The classifieds section looks best as it's repetitious and has no bright colours to clash with the theme. I wrap the pressie in newspaper (beware, white undies and the like might get a bit grubby from the newsprint, put such items in a clear plastic bag first) then pull out my coloured wrapping, parcel wrap and accessories.

If I've got an abundance of plain red or green coloured wrap, I cut a strip and wrap it around the pressie, then cut



a coordinating strip of Chrissie wrap. I tape the plain colour strip once around the present in the first third, then layer the coloured one over it, but along a little. This means you can get a number of pressies out of one piece of wrapping. If there are some ripped pieces, never fear, the rip can look quite abstract all along one edge.



If there's no plain paper, I do a strip of brown parcel wrap and then one of bright coloured paper. Of course, all the coloured paper used on the different pressies has the same colour theme.

If you want, you can wind some coloured string or ribbon around the brown wrap part of the layered section a few times. The colour should tie in nicely with the patterned piece.

If you feel creative, you could use two different patterned pieces. Make sure they either have the same colours in them but a different pattern, or two different colours but a similar pattern, so there is a unifying element.

Last year I had no recycled coloured paper as my baby got into the wrapping before I had time to safely bag it. Instead, I did a newspaper wrap and a brown paper strip, then spray-painted some gum leaves and nuts silver. I stuck these in a nice little bunch on the strip of brown paper and it looked quite arty if I do say so. Even newspaper, brown paper and coloured string wound around a few times over top of the stripe looks great. Just one colour of string is quite chic, or you could use a combination, say gold crossed with red string, or silver and green.

You can do endless variations on this theme using different papers, arrangements, colour combos, paper widths, pressed flowers, patterned edges and the like. It's best to keep all the action in the first third though, as this follows the eye-pleasing design rule of thirds. Just make sure to keep to one theme per Chrissie and your pressies will match beautifully under the tree. If someone gives you a present that doesn't coordinate, just do what I do, and hide it at the back. It will have its day in the sun when you recycle it next year, and nothing should spoil the gorgeous look of all your creativity!

Gluten-Free Chrissie Fare

Give your traditional Christmas cake and pudding a gluten-free update and be sure all your gluten-intolerant family and friends can enjoy them.

CHRISTMAS FRUIT CAKE

250 g butter
1 tbsp rice syrup
5 eggs, lightly beaten
1 tbsp dandelion coffee powder added to ¼ cup hot water and stirred
1 tbsp sugar-free marmalade
1 tbsp finely grated orange rind
1 kg mixed fruit, organic
300 g Chinese dates, chopped
100 g slivered almonds
180 g soy flour
90 g baby rice cereal
90 g rice flour
1 tsp bicarb soda
1 tsp ground cloves
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp mixed spice
¼ cup orange juice
½ cup sweet sherry (helps preserve cake)

Preheat oven to slow 150° C. Line the base and sides of a deep 20 cm square tin with baking paper. Using electric beaters, beat butter and rice syrup in mixing bowl until light and creamy. Add eggs gradually, beating thoroughly after each addition. Add dandelion coffee, marmalade and rind. Beat mixture well until combined.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and add the fruit and almonds. Sift dry ingredients together in a separate bowl. Using a metal spoon, begin to fold dry ingredients into the fruit mixture, alternating dry ingredients and combined juice and sherry or juice only. Stir until just combined and the mixture is almost smooth. Spoon mixture evenly into prepared tin. Sprinkle top with a little cold water and smooth surface with wet fingers.

Tap the cake tin gently on the bench top to settle the mixture. Decorate with fruit or nuts as dietary needs allow. Wrap double thickness of brown paper around tin and secure with a paper clip. Bake for 3 – 4 hours, or until skewer comes out clean when inserted in the centre of the cake. The cooking time for each cake will vary depending on the specific ingredients, the size and style of tin and the type of oven.

Judy Williams, Clayfield.

WHEAT-FREE FRUIT CAKE

½ cup (125 g) butter or margarine
3 cups dried mixed cake fruit
1 cup sugar
¾ cup water
1 tsp bicarb soda
chopped nuts, as desired
small glass wine, sherry or brandy, as desired
2 cups rye or rice flour, as allowed
pinch salt
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp baking powder

In a large saucepan melt butter and add fruit, sugar, water and bicarb soda. Boil gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Leave to cool.

Add nuts and alcohol. Fold in flour and pinch of salt. Add eggs and finally baking powder and mix in well. Turn into a lined, greased loaf or round tin. Bake in a slow oven, about 150° C, for 1½ – 2 hours

For a festive occasion the top of the cake can be decorated with almonds and glacé fruit before baking.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING

½ cup milk
1 tsp bicarb soda
1 lge overripe banana
2 cups stale gluten-free breadcrumbs
2 cups mixed dry fruit
½ tsp ground ginger
½ tsp cinnamon

Lightly grease a 5-cup pudding basin. Combine milk and bicarb soda. Mash banana. Combine breadcrumbs, fruit, spices, milk mixture and banana in a large bowl. Mix well. Spoon the mixture into prepared pudding basin and cover the top. Place the basin in a large saucepan of boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the basin. Boil, covered, for 2 hours.

Mary Morgan, Torquay.

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Make An Angel Gift Box

by Sabrina Cleary, Broadford, Vic.

Make these cute little angel-shaped gift boxes to hold a couple of luxury chocolates or any other small item you'd like to present in a special way. Use coloured cardboard or thick handmade paper, or recycle old Christmas cards.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- cardboard or similar
- ribbon
- plastic bag ties
- 8 cm length of string
- pencil
- scissors
- hole punch

METHOD

The pattern has been reduced by 50 percent from an A4 size, so you will need to photocopy it and increase the size by 200 percent to make it easy to work with. This box can be made as big or as small as you like, just make the pattern the size you require. Once you have the pattern copied at your required size cut out the pattern and use it as a template to transfer the shape onto the cardboard.

Draw around template with pencil and cut out shape.

Fold along all the dotted lines to create the box shape. Then flatten out the box.

Cut slots 1 – 4. Stand the two long flaps up in the middle and slide slot 1 into slot 2 to join the flaps together.

Fold up the side with the two short flaps so it is standing up, then wrap the two short flaps around the long flaps and slide slot 3 into slot 4 to make up the middle section of the box that holds your gift inside.

Tie the ends of the piece of string to make a loop.

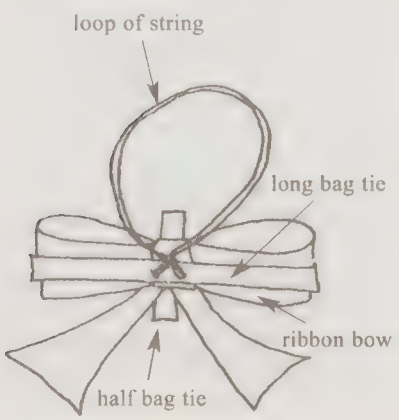
Tie the ribbon into a bow.

At the back of the bow lay the looped string and a freezer or garbage bag tie, as in the diagram.

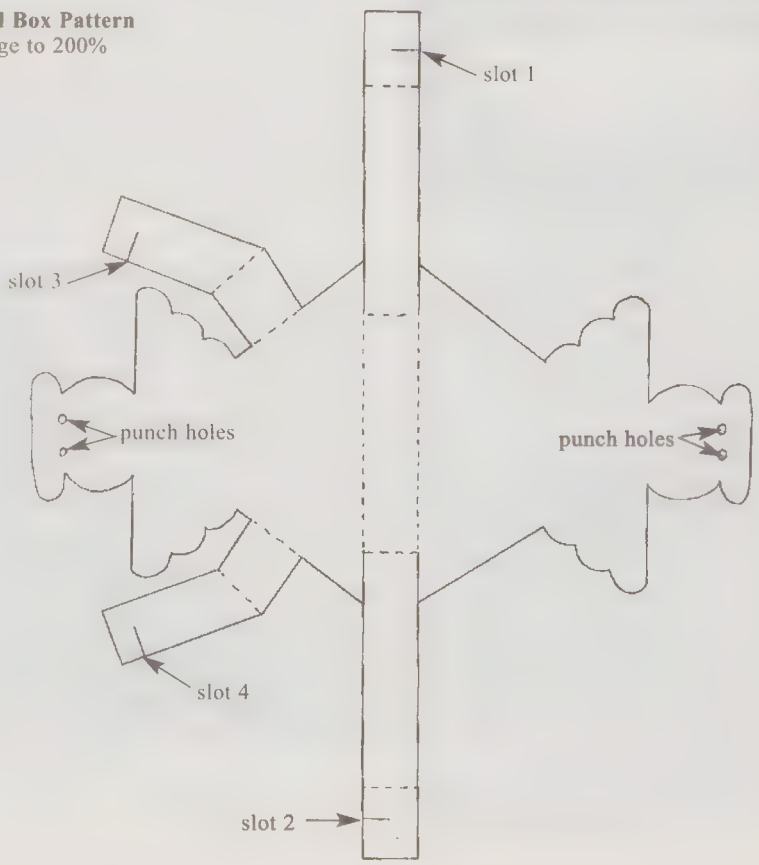
Use half another bag tie around the middle of the bow to tie the bow, string and full bag tie together.

Now punch four holes at the top, two on each side of the box, as shown on the pattern.

Thread ends of full bag tie attached to bow and string to hold the box closed, bringing the two sides together. Twist bag tie together to complete your decorative box.



Angel Box Pattern
Enlarge to 200%



Petite Breeds Of Duck

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

Got a smaller sized acreage, but dying to dabble in ducks? A cute and cost-effective miniature duck might just be the breed for you.

If you're pressed for space, one of the bantam or miniature ducks may be suited to your needs. Being diminutive they don't need a large run to be happy, nor will they cost a fortune to feed. They're absolutely gorgeous looking too and the sight of pint-sized birds doing ducky things is both comical and endearing. What you do need to keep in mind is that ducks of small stature are very alert, active and capable of, and inclined to, flight. They are not necessarily quieter or easier to manage than standard-sized ducks.

As with fowls, when we discuss the small ducks they can be drafted into two categories: true bantams where there are no standard equivalents and miniatures of standard breeds. These have been bred down and are around one-third the size of their large progenitor.

The most well-known bantam is the Mallard, purportedly the breed from which all domesticated ducks derived, barring the Muscovy which has different ancestry. For many years Mallards were banned in some Australian states, due to concerns they would hybridise native ducks. Pinioning of Mallards for exhibition is mandatory in some states, so check for guidelines re keeping them with a local poultry club or government agricultural body before obtaining stock. Remember this relates only to the Mallard breed, not the domestic ducks that have been developed from it.

Top: A bantam Silver Appleyard duck.
Middle: The chubby-cheeked White Call duck.
Above: The Black East Indie, a recent re-creation.

PINT-SIZED BREEDS

Mallard

The feature that makes the Mallard popular is the range of colour varieties that have been developed. The common colour is referred to as normal or natural, but you can also get varieties like Dusky, Brown, Silver, Australian Laced Fawn and White, and many more are in the development process. The natural plumage pattern is found on several domestic breeds, but expressed with small variations. Look out for the Rouen, Saxony, Silver Appleyard and Welsh Harlequin and you will notice similarities in the males' plumage in particular. Mallard drakes weigh 1.14 kilograms (or less) and ducks 0.9 – 1.13 kilograms (or less).

Black East Indie

This breed has been known to the poultry community for more than 150 years, though the specimens currently available in Australia are the result of a re-creation breeding program because the original stock died out decades ago. White Mallard and Cayuga have been crossed and suitable offspring selected and bred together until a petite, green black duck resulted. BEI are not common, but stock are worth searching out. The first eggs laid each season have a sooty coloured shell that gradually fades to a pretty grey-green once laying is established. Drakes weigh between 700 and 900 grams and ducks 700 and 800 grams.

Call Ducks

Remember the quaint, plump plastic bath duck from your young days? It was short-bodied and wide-shouldered with a high domed head, fat cheeks and short wide bill. That's exactly what a Call duck should look like and there's no doubting this popular toy was based on an example of the breed. Calls were originally known as Decoy ducks in England, Kooikers in Holland and Mignon in France, and were used exclusively by gamekeepers and sportsmen to attract wild ducks for shooting. The Calls were naturally very noisy and, when tied in the water so they couldn't escape, even noisier still and successfully brought in the wild species for their hunting owners.

As has been the case with BEI, remnant stock in Australia died out long ago and some good examples of re-creation are appearing at shows. Calls come in varieties like White, Brown, Silver, Blue Fawn and Bibbed and can be distinguished from Mallards by their smaller size and plumper rounder shape. Drakes should weight no more than 570 – 680 grams and ducks 455 – 570 grams.

Elizabeth

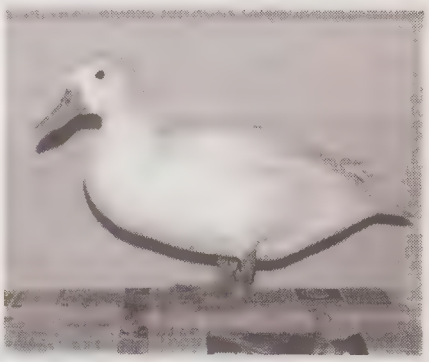
The Elizabeth is an Australian origination, developed in NSW in the 1970s by Lance Ruting and named after his wife. It was derived from crosses of utility Rouen and farmyard ducks, the standardised result being a great dual-purpose duck. At present some breeders have selected for egg production, favouring a lighter-framed bird, and others for a table bird that is well fleshed and heavier. Ducks are great layers of white-shelled eggs and good broodies and mothers. To these utility properties you can add a quiet temperament and an attractive looking bird. Drakes weigh between 1.5 and 1.80 kilograms and ducks 1.25 and 1.47 kilograms.

Silver Appleyard

This miniature of the popular standard breed is dual-purpose as well as striking looking. You might need help distinguishing miniature Appleyards from Elizabeths; there is such a variation in the plumage markings of both that confusion is inevitable. The bill of Elizabeths is blue-grey, whereas it's yellow on Appleyards, and the legs of female Elizabeths are a bronze shade as against the light orange on Appleyards. Recommended weights are 1.20 – 1.36 kilograms for drakes and 1.07 – 1.20 kilograms for ducks.

New Breeds Or Varieties

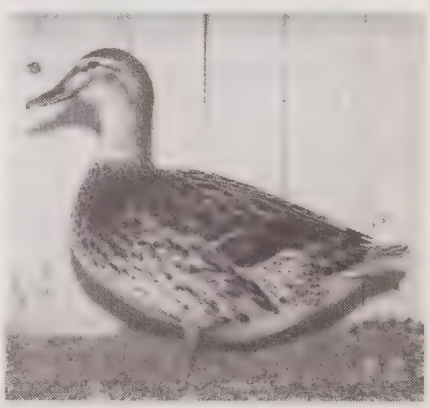
A miniature Saxony has been bred down from its standard antecedent and a Crested miniature is well along in the path to development.



MANAGEMENT TIPS

With regular handling all the pint-sized breeds will become quiet and even family pets. They will still be skittish and unless a wing is pinioned, or has feathers cut regularly to unbalance the bird, they may take to the skies and not return. Small ducks are more vulnerable to predators like crows and hawks and wild cats. Ensure they are safe when you are not present to look out for them. Ducklings will need extra protection because of their size. Avoid drownings and accidents by using scaled-down feed and water containers for the first few weeks.

Care should always be taken when handling bantams and miniatures; they're agile, alert and quick moving and their bones are small, so the risk of damaging little legs or wings is greater.



Top: An Aussie, the Elizabeth duck.
Above Right: White Mallard.
Right: Brown Mallard.
Bottom Right: Silver Mallard.

Turning Trash Into Treasure

by Deborah McDonnell, Walpeup, Vic.

You wouldn't believe the things some people throw away these days, under the impression that they aren't useful any more. In my experience, nearly all of these items can be turned into handy devices about the house or garden.

Take, for instance, an old clotheshorse. I found one a while ago, the metal sort that folds down so you can tuck it away. It was so rusty that you could hardly unfold it, and any clothes put on it would have come away a rusty orange colour. My mother wanted to know what on earth I'd do with such a useless old thing, but I kept it. It was a conversation point in our garden for a while, then I got my brainwave.

I took some old chicken wire that I'd been saving and cut it into lengths slightly longer than the spaces between the opposite bars of the opened clotheshorse. Then I placed a length over the top two bars and tucked the excess underneath, twisting the rough edges of wire through to neaten and hold it in place. I repeated this on each level and . . . I had a great rack to hold seed trays and pot plants. Just what I'd always wanted.

But what about something a little more common? Say, a long-life milk carton. Cut off the top, wash it, punch a few holes in the bottom with a skewer, and you've got a great seedling pot.

Or egg cartons? These make excellent biodegradable seed-raising punnets. When the plants are big enough, cut the carton up and plant each segment in the ground. The cardboard decomposes and the plant keeps growing; no transplant shock for the seedling and a little more organic matter for the soil. The process might be aided by cutting four or five slits around the base of each segment before planting, to let the plant's roots get out more easily when the time comes.

Toilet rolls also have a place in the garden. Have you ever had trouble with the leaves of young or freshly transplanted plants drooping all over the ground and getting covered with dirt? I did, especially with chives. So I got a handful of toilet rolls (you know, the cardboard tubes that come inside toilet paper), and cut them in half. Then I held up the little plant's leaves and slipped each cardboard ring over a plant. It held them up beautifully and it put an end to the frustration of trying to water the chives without burying them.

These are just a few of the hidden treasures that people throw away every day. If you use your imagination and have a good look, I'm sure you'll find dozens more. And think; every piece of treasure you find is one less piece being wasted and going into landfill. So have a good look, and see what trash you can turn into treasure.

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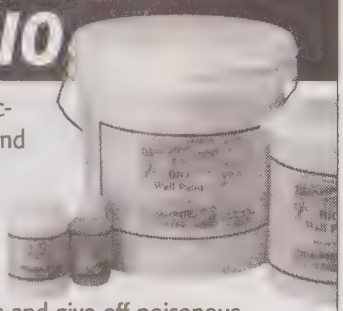

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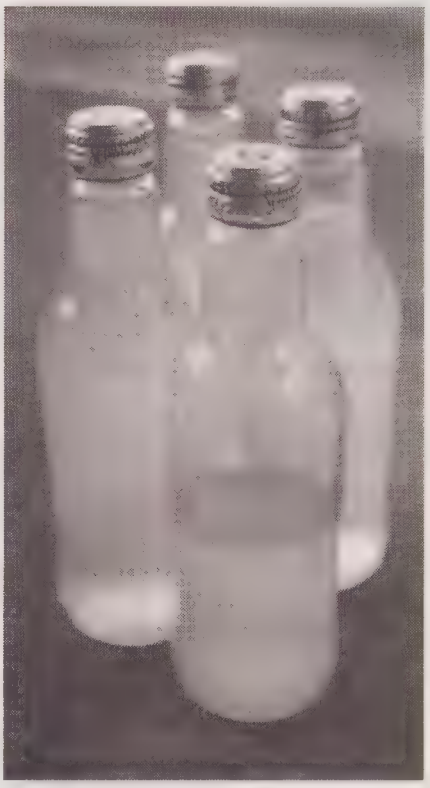
Homemade Summer Cordials

by Jody Lee, Townsville, Qld.

Homemade drinks taste better and have none of the artificial colours and flavours that you get with commercial cordials. If you have your own source of fruit, what could be better? There are no chemical sprays to worry about and the base products are free. There are lots of recipes in old cookery books for cordials. Have a look in the op shop if you don't own a few of grandma's kitchen guides, and you may find a couple to try. These are my favourites; they are easy to make, put used soft drink bottles to good use and taste great as well.



STRAWBERRY SWIG

1 kg ripe strawberries
1 lt water
2 kg sugar, approx
100 ml white wine vinegar

Hull and rinse strawberries. Place in a very large saucepan with 1 lt water. Bring to boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Pour through strainer, discard fruit pulp. Return liquid to saucepan, measure number of cups of liquid, adding 1 cup of sugar per cup of liquid. Bring to boil, stirring to dissolve sugar, and boil 5 minutes. Stir in wine vinegar, take off heat and pour into sterilised bottles.

Use like cordial; this is gorgeous with cold mineral water.

LEMON GINGER GUSH

ginger root, about size of your index finger
1.5 lt water
juice and rind 1 lemon
100 g sugar

Peel and finely slice ginger, put with water, lemon and sugar in a large boiler or saucepan. Bring to boil, then simmer gently for 15 minutes. Strain and bottle in sterilised bottles. Add to chilled mineral or soda water. A sharper taste may be gained from using 1 – 2 limes instead of a lemon, or even a grapefruit.

MUM'S LEMON CORDIAL

My mother made this weekly over the summer holidays and we loved it. If you prefer a sharp lemon flavour, add in an extra lemon or substitute a lime for a lemon.

6 – 8 lemons (depending on size)
2 tbsp citric acid
1 tbsp tartaric acid
1 tbsp Epsom salts
6 cups water
2 kg sugar

Roll lemons back and forwards on bench top to soften for juicing, but grate rind before cutting and squeezing. Place in large bowl with acids and Epsom salts. Pour water and sugar into a saucepan and bring to boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Pour boiling mix onto ingredients in bowl, stirring to dissolve. Allow to cool, strain out grated rind and pour into sterilised bottles and cork. Keeps well if you can resist it.

RASPBERRY VINEGAR

Try this refreshing drink when you have a glut of berries and tire of making jam.

1.25 kg ripe raspberries
1.70 lt white wine vinegar
sugar

Place about one-third of the raspberries in a basin and pour in the white wine vinegar. Cover with a cloth and set aside in a cool place for 3 days. Strain off vinegar and keep, discarding the berries. Repeat this process again twice so that all berries are used. Measure the liquid, then pour into a stainless steel saucepan. Add 0.45 kg sugar for each 0.55 lt of liquid, bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes, removing scum if any appears. Cool, strain and pour into sterilised bottles and seal. Added to chilled mineral or soda water this is a lovely drink.

GR Readers

In recent weeks the GR office has received back issue orders from two separate readers with payment, but no return address.

If you are writing in for back issues, or anything that needs to be sent out to you, please make sure you include your ADDRESS every single time you write.

And if you think you may be one of those mentioned, give the office a ring or drop us a line. Thanks!

Tomatoes In The Weeds

by Janice Clifton, Scone, NSW.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Here was a totally different approach to what a lot of us do each year when we grow a summer garden including some tomatoes.

I'd been given directions on how to reach this little village up in the mountains, in the bush near Scone, where I was to collect some pie melons to make jam. I could see a few pumpkin leaves popping up here and there out of an overgrown fenced plot as I walked up a path to the house. There were a few picked pumpkins near a shed.

'Come and see the garden', rang out a voice, clear in the mountain air. The only other sounds were magpie warbles and the creek babbling round the bend. Mark was standing near a small fig tree. 'I'll come round, just watch where you put your feet; there's been a big brown in here. I think he's in the shed.'

'Wonderful', I thought, but got through the fence to see the garden. Sure enough, there were pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, beans, carrots and tomatoes growing in amongst the weedy fat hen and amaranth and all sorts of grasses.

I was surprised to see lovely pink and red tomatoes, untouched by fruit fly, growing on unstaked bushes. I was told how they're grown. First, the ground is ploughed over. Three rows are chosen and planted with seed, dried from the previous year, that has been sieved through coarse gauze. Handfuls of seed are sown in the chosen rows, always with the new moon in October, when the ground is warming and most danger of frost is past. The seeds are then watered.

In late November to early December, when the plants are 15 to 20 centimetres high, they're thinned out and transplanted into other rows. After watering again the tomato plants are practically left to nature, and hopefully it rains. Seedlings are only weeded when small; once thriving, they're left alone. The weeds protect the vines and fruit from insects and bugs. No diseases seem to lurk up there either. The crickets do have an occasional nibble, but who's complaining! The tomatoes are ready to pick from February to April. Some are sold and some are given to friends. Mark is known for his chilli tomato sauce and beef jerky. He grows the best dry pumpkins around.

Fresh bread, tomato and cucumber sandwiches were delicious for our lunch under the old pine trees. We didn't see the brown snake that day, but another time, well that's another story!

HOT CHILLI TOMATO SAUCE

4½ kg fresh, ripe, home-grown tomatoes
2 lge onions
30 red (hot) chillies
500 ml vinegar
1 kg sugar
2 tbsp mustard
1½ tbsp curry powder
1½ tbsp salt
1½ tsp cayenne pepper
1½ tbsp crushed garlic

Skin tomatoes in boiling water and roughly chop. Peel onions and slice. Cut chillies in half. Place these, together with vinegar, in a large pan and boil for half an hour. Strain or put through a blender. Return to pan, add other ingredients and boil till thick. Add sugar and boil till mixture thickens again, approximately 2 – 3 hours.

PUMPKIN QUICHE

1 sheet shortcrust pastry
200 g tasty orange pumpkin, cubed, cooked till tender
½ cup cashew nuts
¼ cup cream
150 g tasty cheese, grated
30 g spring onion, chopped
3 eggs
½ tsp nutmeg

Line a 25 cm greased quiche dish with pastry. Arrange pumpkin and cashews over pastry. Combine cream, cheese and onion in separate bowl. Beat eggs, add to cream mixture, add nutmeg then pour over pumpkin. Bake in moderate oven 35 – 40 minutes.

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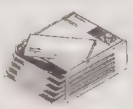
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OGRR1205

My Italian Christmas Heritage

by Teresa Vanni, Nunawading, Vic.

Italians just loooove food. We talk about it, dream about it, get finicky about quality and freshness and, above all, we love to share abundantly with our family and friends. Until I started to ask questions about how my parents had celebrated Christmas in the past, I thought it had always been this way.

My parents grew up in the neighbouring villages of Piancarani and Civitalla Del Tronto in Abbruzzi in a time where it was common to live in a modest, self-sufficient manner and uncommon to venture too far beyond the boundaries of your village. For my parents in the 1940s and '50s, it was a time of financial poverty and great spiritual wealth.

Daily meals were based on the seasonal fresh produce that we read about in cooking magazines, in small quantities to be 'just enough' to appease hunger and fuel the body. Buying a handful of dry pasta or a couple of sardines from the local store was a task undertaken moments before the meal was prepared. There was no preoccupation with food, just great appreciation and satisfaction.

Christmas was a time of joy for my mother, who remembers her childhood Christmases to be the happiest days of her life. Snowy weather prohibited work in the fields of the landowner, so her mother spent days at home and her beloved father finally returned from his work in Switzerland. This was the gift she holds dearest to her heart, along with the memory of writing her annual letter to her father.

Each child wrote a letter to their father (papa), apologising for the times they were naughty and promising to be more loving, better behaved, and a good child for the coming year, and placed it under their papa's dinner plate on Christmas Eve. My parents called this gorgeous tradition *La letterina per il papa*. Papa would pretend not to see the letter and the child would writhe with anticipation until he finally saw that there was something under his plate. Each papa had his own way of showing surprise and delight and there would be much excitement as the letter of each child was read. The reward was usually 100 – 200 lire, which was used by the child to buy school supplies or some lollies, a huge treat.

Cagginetti, delicious chestnut and chocolate pastries, served with coffee and liqueur.

The main event for Christmas Eve was the *letterina* and dinner, which consisted of soup, fish and salad. The meal was followed by midnight mass for the entire village. Families often had many children, so each ate in their own home and shared Christmas wishes at midnight mass. Though the extended families were too large (and too poor) to hold huge feasts, they shared what little they had. Several days before Christmas each family would give both sets of grandparents a hamper, which usually included coffee, sugar, chocolate and a piece of salt cod to be enjoyed over the festivities.

The celebration meal on Christmas Day was simple, yet much anticipated. There was golden chicken broth, with puffed pillows of pastry floating on top called cicetti – this was the only time of the year for this specialty. There was freshly made pasta with a simple tomato sauce flavoured with herbs, spices, onion and garlic (sometimes the wing tips of the chicken that made the broth scented the sauce too), and topped with grated homemade pecorino cheese. Finally, there were delicate parcels of flaky pastry filled with a wicked mix of chestnuts, chocolate and even liqueur.

The Christmas I remember as a child was focused on the celebration of Jesus' birth, and was marked by mass, and food that was a slight upgrade on the menu my parents had as children. There was lasagne instead of pasta and a course of roast pork or turkey.

As a newlywed married to a beautiful Aussie man, I'm always delighted to see his face light up as we share in abundance in our celebrations. Too much wine, too much food, and too much talk – followed by a big sleep.

Christmas in this wealthy country is a vastly different experience from that of my parents' childhood. I think, if my parents could, they would give us the gift of travelling through time and space so we too could enjoy the simple pleasures and great joy they have relished remembering for this story – thank you Mum and Dad.

May all readers have a wondrous and joyful Christmas, whatever their traditions.

CAGGINETTI – CHESTNUT RAVIOLI
Make the filling 1 or 2 days before Christmas.

Filling

3 cups chestnut purée, available canned from continental supermarkets
1 cup coarsely ground almonds
½ cup sugar
¼ cup pure Dutch cocoa powder (not drinking chocolate)
½ cup grated chocolate
zest of 1 lemon
zest of 1 orange
200 ml rum or brandy (you can reduce this amount and add more coffee)
4 tbsp pre-made espresso coffee, cooled

Place all ingredients into a large bowl and mix until thoroughly combined. This requires a bit of elbow grease, or you can cheat by using a food processor. Try the filling and adjust for sweetness to your taste, adding more sugar until it tastes good to you. Now adjust the mix to make a consistency that is tender yet holds together; add more coffee if you need a more tender mix or more ground almonds if you need it stiffer. It should be a consistency between stiff and soft that is easy to spoon onto the ravioli pastry. Put the mix to the side while you make the pastry.

Pastry

1 kg flour
4 eggs
150 ml olive oil
150 ml white wine

Make a mound of the flour on a clean table or bench, then make a well in the centre of the mound. Place eggs, oil and wine into the well and mix with a fork. Keep mixing, using your fork to slowly incorporate a little bit of the flour into the mix at a time until the liquids become quite thick. Use your hand to bring in more flour until you have enough flour incorporated to be a tender dough. This is when you begin kneading. Knead for just 5 minutes until the pastry shows a smooth surface, then cover dough with an upturned bowl and rest it on the bench for 30 minutes. If you press your dough into a flat square shape instead of a round one, it will be easier to divide evenly later.

Take the dough and cut into 4 equal pieces. Leave 3 pieces to rest under the bowl.

By Hand: Working with 1 piece of dough at a time, flatten the dough so it has a squarish shape. Flour your clean bench and flatten the dough with a rolling pin, making it as thin as possible. To get an even thickness roll the dough in one direction, then lift it, sprinkle more flour on the bench and rotate the dough 90° before rolling again. With a knife, cut the dough into strips about 10 cm wide. Sprinkle the strips with flour, stack them up and cover with another clean cloth while you roll out the remaining pieces of dough.

By Pasta Machine: Set your pasta machine to the largest setting. Flatten the dough a little, and roll it through the machine, fold the dough in half then repeat. Continue passing the dough through the pasta machine (at least twice on each setting) until you reach the second-last setting. You'll know if the consistency is right because you'll notice that the pastry has become smoother to touch with each time you passed it through the machine. Repeat with each piece of pastry.

Assembling And Cooking Ravioli

Take your filling and neatly place it on your pasta sheet as you would if you were making other ravioli. Brush around each gorgeous mound of filling with an egg white wash, fold over the pasta and seal, making sure to keep the air out by working your way around the filling. Any air in your ravioli could make the filling pop out and you don't want that.

Use a pasta cutter (like a small zigzag pizza cutter) to cut out the ravioli. For more security you could go around the edges again with the tines of a fork, as you would around the edge of a pie.

Choose a deep-sided saucepan that will comfortably fit 3 – 4 ravioli in it at a time. Place it on the hotplate with 5 cm deep olive oil and heat to 190° C, or until a wooden spoon handle gets bubbles around it when placed in the oil.

Fry the ravioli for 1 – 2 minutes on each side – until the pastry turns a golden colour. Strain, then place in a single layer onto paper towel and sprinkle with caster sugar as you go until all the ravioli are cooked.

These are served at room temperature with coffee and liqueur if you desire.

Teresa included more of her family's traditional Italian Christmas recipes, but as they are more suitable for an Aussie winter we've kept them for you to enjoy in the colder weather.

Knitted Chrissie Angel

by Marjorie Bligh, Devonport, Tas.

With a little effort and ingenuity your old pantyhose can be made into Christmas angels. Begin by cutting legs or tops of pantyhose into a continuous strip about a centimetre wide. Wind the strip up as you cut to avoid tangles. You can use different colours of yarn for the head, skirt and wings.

HEAD

Using 5 millimetre needles (old size 6), cast on 6 stitches.

Row 1: K6.

Row 2: K1, wool around needle. Repeat to end.

Row 3: Knit.

Repeat rows 2 and 3 until there are 33 stitches on the needle.

Next Row: Purl.

Cut off yarn and thread it through a needle then pass the needle through the 33 stitches. Remove needle and draw yarn together tightly. Stitch along the side to form a head.

SKIRT

Pick up 5 stitches at base of head.

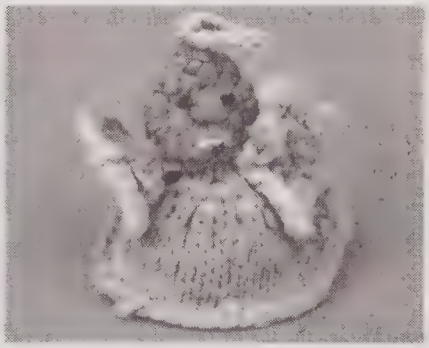
Row 1: Knit.

Row 2: Purl.

Row 3: K1, wool around needle. Repeat to end.

Row 4: Knit.

Repeat rows 3 and 4 until there are 33 stitches on the needle.



Knit another 9 rows, alternating knit and purl. If you want the skirt more flared, repeat row 3.

Cast off and sew up back.

WINGS

Pick up 3 stitches on the side at top of skirt.

Row 1: Knit.

Row 2: Purl.

Row 3: K1, wool around needle. Repeat to end.

Row 4: Knit.

Repeat rows 3 and 4 until there are 17 stitches on the needle.

Cast off. Repeat above on the other side to make the second wing.

FINISHING OFF

Sew eyes and mouth onto the head section, or draw on features with a suitable contrasting marking pen. Pull out a knob of yarn for the nose.

Make a loop and sew it to the head to allow the angel to be hung from the tree. If you want to jazz it up a little, dab some glitter glue on or lightly spray with gold for a gilded effect, then hang carefully from the top of the Chrissie tree and admire. Who would have thought your lovely angel once held a foot?

EASY CIDER RECIPE

Take 1.5 kilograms windfall apples and mince or liquidise them, skins, pips, cores and all. Place in a 10 litre plastic bucket and add 5 litres boiling water and 500 grams sugar, then stir till dissolved. Cream 25 grams fresh bakers' yeast and stir in when liquid has cooled to 70° C. Cover with a cloth, stand in a warm place and leave to ferment for a week. Strain into litre screw top bottles, but don't screw down tight or they may explode. When clear – about 7 days – tip ½ teaspoon of white sugar into each bottle. Leave for a further 7 days and consume.

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by Jenna Carole

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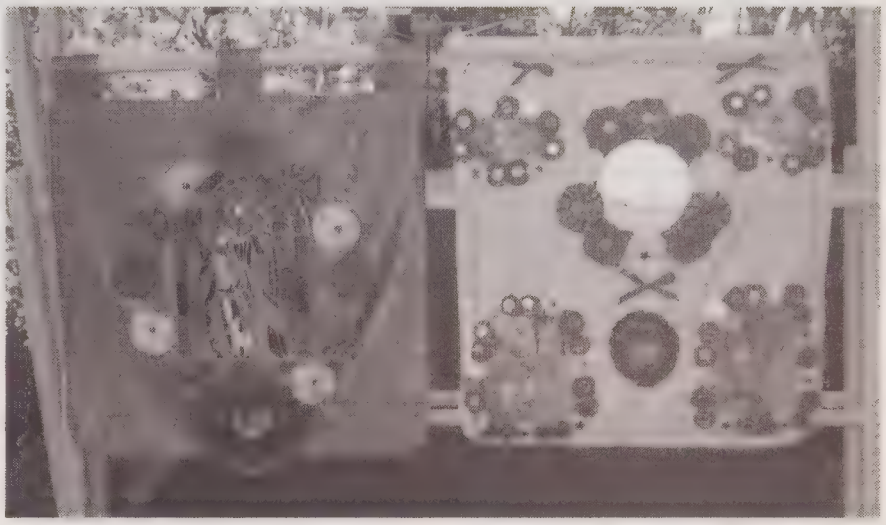
Christmas Wall Hanging

by Jose Robinson, Noosaville, Qld.

Christmas is a very special time, so it's a good opportunity to give your imagination free rein when creating decorations for your home. One idea I had last festive season was to make use of the very attractive cards from the previous year by cutting some of the bright pictures off the cards and using them as a type of appliqué for new Christmas wall hangings.

I made several hangings using pieces from my fabric scrap bag as a background to attach the pictures to. The results were quite original and pleasing. The average size of the completed wall hangings was 40 centimetres square. I used themes for subjects as well as specific groups of colours. For example, I used only the Bethlehem stable and the holy figures as the main picture for one hanging, with the three wise men to one side and angels to balance the design. I used green, red and white for the main colours on one hanging and worked Christmas bells, holly and plum puddings on another.



ASSEMBLING BITS AND PIECES

I began by sorting through my cards and grouping them into suitable compatible pictures. Then I cut out some of the shapes that appealed to me and worked two rows of plain crochet in white yarn around each picture as a binding.

Next I cut 40-centimetre squares, some green and some white, of satin and shiny taffeta. I backed each with plain white or cream cotton fabric and stitched and turned the squares on the sewing machine, leaving a few centimetres open on the top to turn the fabric through.

I lined up some scrap pieces of tartan ribbon as well as green, red and white plain ribbon.

I made lots of 'puff-balls' (yo-yos), in two different sizes, from green, red and white satin, and finished each with a white pearl shirt button in the centre.

Now all the bits and pieces were ready to come together.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

For the hanging pictured here with the white background, I placed Christmas card pictures onto the background, roughly at each corner, in a pleasing arrangement and pinned them in place. Next I hand-stitched each one onto the background. The small puff-balls were hand-stitched as a frame around each picture.

In my sewing cupboard I'd found a 10-centimetre diameter mirror. I ran a gathering thread around a piece of fabric slightly larger than the mirror's size and made a fabric frame for it. Then I sewed it in a central position on the hanging and stitched some of the larger puff-balls around it. A heart cut-out with a tartan ribbon frill hand-stitched around it and a few red bows completed that hanging.

For the other wall hanging, I used one only central card, a painted mosaic of the Nativity scene. I cut it out and shaped it like a stained-glass church window, coming to a peak at the centre top. After working a couple of plain crochet rows around the card, I hand-stitched it onto a green background. I then added a frame of the larger size puff-balls completely around the mosaic picture. Another heart shape with tartan ribbon frill was placed beneath the Nativity scene.

MOUNTING THE HANGINGS

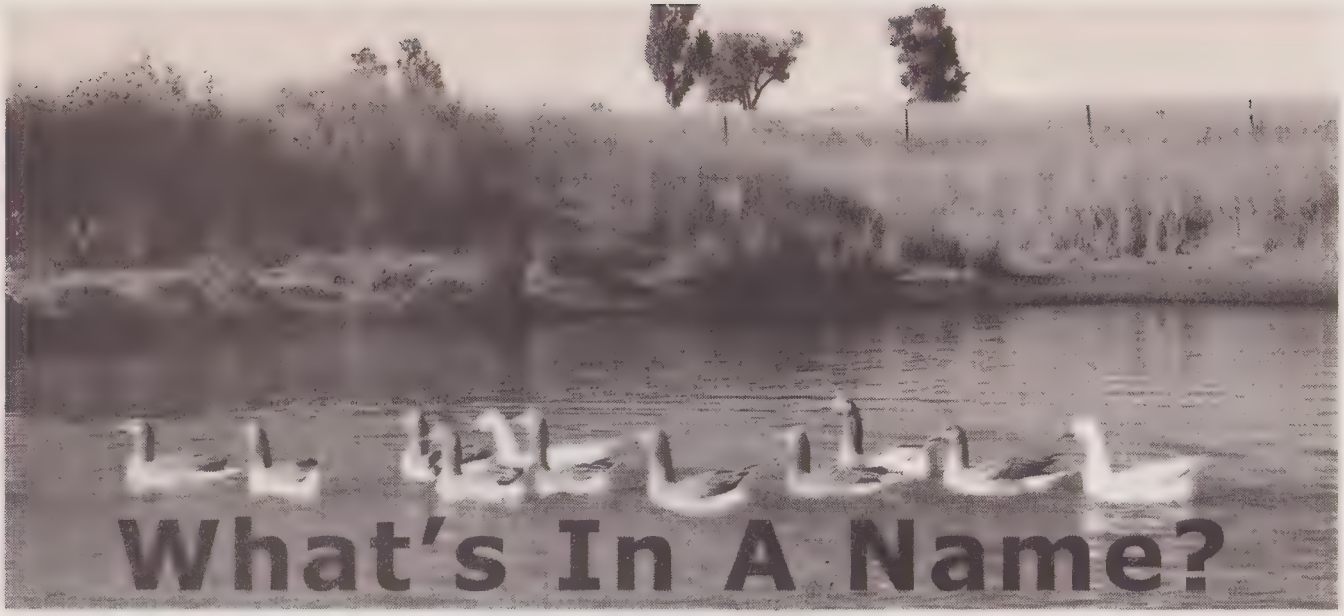
I stapled the wall hangings to wooden rods, about 30 centimetres long and 1.5 centimetres in diameter, then stapled some ribbon on each for a hanger.

TO MAKE FABRIC PUFF-BALLS

For the small size, cut fabric rounds using a lid or similar for a pattern; mine were eight centimetres in diameter. For the larger size cut circles 11 centimetres in diameter. Using a needle and double cotton, fold over the edge of the circle to make a small hem and run a gathering thread completely around the circumference, then draw it up and secure in the centre. Using the same cotton, stitch a small shirt button to the centre point, going right through the centre to the back and end off cotton. Then the ball is ready to stitch onto the surround of the Christmas card pictures.

After all the puff-balls were sewn onto the background, I finished mine by gluing tiny gold stars onto each shirt button on the puff-balls; these sparkle in the light.

There is no end to the different sizes and shapes that you could create using this technique of reusing old Christmas cards.



What's In A Name?

by Louisa Butler, Bingara, NSW.

Names, I have always believed, are very important. They must be chosen with great care because it is well known that people, animals and objects grow to resemble their given tag. I applied the Name Theory when I chose Alexander and Emma as names for my children and am happy to report they are showing promise as the respective 'Leader of Men' and 'Universal Healer'.

Like fellow GR readers, I also shared the dream of living in the country. So in the early 1990s I bought a block of land near Lowood, just west of Brisbane. This move almost destroyed my Name Theory. I called the small block 'Rivendell', and moved in just as the worst drought in Queensland's recorded history began. My Tolkienish fantasies evaporated with the four dams and the house tanks. The Name Theory almost withered and died, but I resurrected it just in time, by renaming the place 'Changi'. It lived up to its name as a work camp.

The next major challenge to the theory came in the form of a small grey and white gosling. Daisy came to live with us after her siblings were killed by crows. The young goose was raised on starter crumble and slept in a small box with a ticking clock for company.

I don't know about you, but when I think of the name Daisy, I envisage a sunny, happy disposition. Our Daisy more closely resembled a noxious weed from hell. Things began well. We were enthralled as small feathers gradually replaced the down, and cheered the day that she flew for the first time. Daisy endeared herself by walking with Alex to the school bus every morning and meeting him again each afternoon.

The drought continued on its weary way, and Daisy was five months old before seeing a body of water greater in size than her drinking dish. It rained at last and we walked down the paddock. Daisy followed and saw us on the far side of the dam. She then walked straight into the water to come across. The goose faltered halfway, as if she suddenly realised that she was doing something new. She was swimming! The moments of panic were soon replaced by the grace we associate with geese in water. This was the only solo swim that Daisy ever undertook. After this, she refused to enter the water unless one of us was in swimming.

The flaws in Daisy's sunny disposition began slowly. At first it was just with visitors and strangers. Daisy did not like them. She would approach them like a cowardly dog from behind, then suddenly attack and grab any vulnerable flesh in her vice-like beak. Our visitors became fewer and fewer, despite the ritual greeting of arming each person with a piece of polythene pipe as they emerged from their car.

Daisy was responsible for the back

verandah never being completed. The builder was crawling out from under the house, which was low, making his progress very slow. The bald spot on his head caught the sun as he wriggled out. Daisy must have been watching with great interest. She appeared from nowhere and pecked him right in the middle of the shiny circle. Swear words tinged the air azure and the builder quit on the spot.

The human capacity for forgiveness is very large. The family pretended not to notice the unfinished verandah as we moved a few steps closer to our other dream, the mango orchard. The soil had been prepared, the holes had been dug and at last the rains had come. We were ready and went out and purchased 50 seedlings. Daisy showed an immediate interest and ate five seedlings before we finished unloading them. We put the remaining 45 plants under a heavy sheet of plastic to protect them from the goose. It was dark and we planned to plant them the next morning. Daisy had other ideas and went out of her way to save us a lot of hard work The morning light revealed 45 precision holes in the plastic and not a single seedling beneath.

Our capacity for forgiveness began to dwindle when Daisy, dismayed at the lack of visitors, began to bite us. Collecting the eggs, getting the cows in, or watering the garden had to be planned with military precision. We did not venture outside without being armed with a piece of trusty polythene pipe.

We applied amateur psychology to find a solution for our problem progeny. Of course, that was it! Daisy was behaving badly because she was lonely.

We had to get her a companion. Our search resulted in a white goose with clear blue eyes.

'The males are always white with those colour eyes', we were told by a very confident local farmer. So we purchased Monty.

The fairy-tale quality in our lives had still not been driven out by the reality of country living. We drove home, each envisioning Daisy's joy and the ecstatic mutual goose greetings that would take place. Instead, Daisy was unimpressed with the new companion and the next few days passed with both geese studiously ignoring each other.

Daisy's behaviour did not improve with the passing weeks. The family loyalty finally evaporated when she attacked four-year-old Emma. Daisy struck at Emma's face and eyes, so we decided that she was too dangerous to give away. We arranged to have her slaughtered. The children and I could not bear to eat Daisy, so we gave her to friends who did not share our scruples. In fact, they seemed to gain particular joy in repaying Daisy's bites with their own.

Monty did not at first seem to be upset by Daisy's disappearance, but then appeared to be withdrawn and rather mopey. We realised our concern was misplaced when we found the white goose sitting on six eggs. Macho Monty was a girl, and if the eggs weren't infertile then Daisy must have been a . . .

Three weeks later six goslings hatched. We then had seven geese parading the farm looking for trouble. We called them Storm Troopers in Feathers, and they each did justice to the Name Theory.

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Selecting The Right Generator

by Peter Crawley, Oakleigh, Vic.

Whether it's from a need to provide our own electricity or a desire to protect ourselves from power outages, many of us face the decision to buy a generator at some stage of our self-sufficiency lifestyles. However, selecting a generator is not as easy as you might think; it must be sized to start the appliances and equipment you want to run. This information is not widely known and, because of my lack of knowledge of the technicalities, I ended up purchasing the wrong size generator.

This article aims to provide you with enough information to make an informed decision in sizing the power generation capacity needed for your appliances and equipment. I've summarised my experience and the results of my research into a five-step process.

REQUIRED VOLTAGE OUTPUT

Before you look at any generator you need to understand what output voltage or voltages you require the generator to provide. For example, in Australia it's common to want to run 240-volt equipment, however, in some cases the generator might be needed to charge batteries or to run battery-powered equipment, in which case a 12-volt output is required. If you are running a business, you might need 415 volts (three-phase) output. First, decide the type of equipment you want to run with your generator.

OPERATING POWER NEEDED

You now need to understand exactly what items you want the generator to power. For example, if the power goes off do you want to use the air conditioning and freezer or just power the lights and the TV? Once you decide this you need to collect the actual power consumption of all the items to be run by the generator. If your appliances or equipment don't have their operating power consumption printed on the labels, I suggest you use the estimates provided in Table 1 to assist you in this task.

In some cases, in particular for commercial equipment and some air conditioners, the labels do not provide the operating power (in watts), but do provide the horsepower rating for the appliance. In this case you need to convert the horsepower rating into watts. You will find Table 2 useful for this. Experts in this field will notice that these tables are not exactly correct as I have rounded the actual power consumption up to provide a margin of error and to make the calculations easier.

STARTING POWER NEEDED

We must now bring in the first complexity that I didn't take into account when purchasing my first generator. You cannot just size your generator on the operating wattage of any motorised device. This is because the starting power requirement for a motor is significantly more than its operating power. In fact, I found that some of my motorised devices, when under load, required four times as much power to start as they did to run.

So, when rating your generator capacity you need to rate it using its starting capacity as well as its operating capacity. For example, my one-third horsepower motor (400 watts operating power) actually needed 1600 watts in the first 10 or so seconds to start and my 1000 volt amp generator certainly couldn't handle that.

The reason I am suggesting that you need to collect both figures is because certain more expensive generators can take short-term overloads of two or more times their operating capacity for short durations. There is a possible issue of whether they can provide this output without a significant output voltage change, but that is something we will cover later.

NUMBER OF APPLIANCES YOU WANT TO RUN AT ONCE

The more appliances you want to run at the same time the larger the generating capacity you require, in particular when it comes to motorised devices. So now determine how many appliances you want to, or could possibly, run at the same time and total the wattage (both start-up as well as operating). For example, if you want a generator to run a refrigerator and a freezer, the wattage (Table 1) of the refrigerator could be 800 and that of the freezer 1000. To select the correct size generator you must decide if it is at any time possible for both the refrigerator and freezer to start together. If so, you would need (1800 x 4) 7200 watts capacity. If you can be certain (which I am not sure is possible) both appliances will never start at the same time, you would only need 4800 watts (to run the refrigerator while starting the freezer).

TABLE 1 – ESTIMATED OPERATING POWER CONSUMPTION

Home Equipment	Typical Wattage	Farm Equipment	Typical Wattage
Refrigerator	400 – 800	Ventilator fans	300 – 800
Freezer	600 – 1000	Silo load/unloader	2000 – 7500
Electric frypan	1200 – 1500	Feed mixing	800 – 1500
Electric stove	3000 – 4000	Feed conveyor	800 – 5000
Washing machine	400 – 800	Bulk milk cooler	1500 – 12,000
Water pump	800 – 2500	Electric fence	7 – 30
Water heater	1500 – 5000	Sump pump	250 – 1000
Electric fan	75 – 300	Electric drill	1000 – 2000
Air conditioner	200 – 5000	10" circular saw	1200 – 2000
Television	75 – 500	Water well pump	1000 – 5000

TABLE 2 – WATTS REQUIRED

Motor (hp)	To Start	To Run
1/6	1000	215
1/4	1500	300
1/3	2000	400
1/2	2300	575
1	4000	1000
5	18,000	4500
7.5	28,000	7000
10	36,000	9000

NUMBER OF VOLT AMPS NEEDED

Now we reach the next level of complexity. In Australia generators are rarely rated in watts, they are actually rated in volt amps. This was something I didn't understand when I purchased my first generator because the basic formula for power is: power (in watts) = operating voltage (volts) multiplied by operating current (amps). So in my mind the rating in volt amps must be the same as the rating in watts. Well, if you are running a motorised device, it isn't, and the difference is significant.

The problem is the type of load connected to the generator. If the load is pure resistance, such as electric heating or incandescent lighting (but not all energy saver or fluorescent lights), the volt amp rating is equal to a watt rating. However, if you are connecting a motorised device or something with a transformer attached, a 'power factor' must be used to handle the difference caused by these nonresistive loads. Exactly how this power factor is calculated is too complex to handle in an article like this one, however, nearly all small generator manufacturers assume that you are going to run something with a motor attached and so provide their power rating in volt amps. The problem is what power factor they used to calculate it, which is something that you normally have to ask as it is rarely provided in documentation.

In my case the generator manufacturer used a power factor rating of 0.8. This meant that the maximum wattage that I could run (no matter what the load: incandescent lights, battery charger, small fridge etc) with my 1000 volt amp generator was actually only 800 watts (see below as to how it was calculated).

Formula: watts = volt amps x power factor
Application: 800 watts = 1000 x 0.8

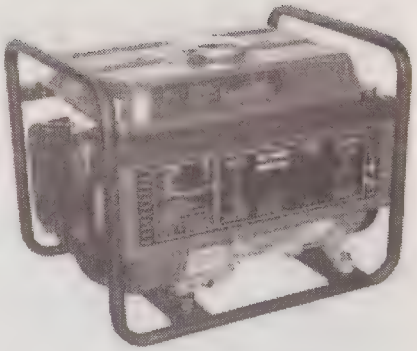
So, back to my example: my one-third horsepower (400 watts operating power) motor actually needed 1600 watts in the first 10 or so seconds to start. In order to power this motor I would actually need to have a generator that would provide a minimum of 2000 volt amps. This was calculated using the following formula.

Formula: volt amps = watts required ÷ power factor
Application: 2000 volt amps = 1600 watts ÷ 0.8

Any wonder my generator was overloaded, as it would only provide half the number of volt amps actually required to start the motor. It could certainly maintain the motor when it was operating, but it was those 10 seconds or so while starting that caused the problem.

Today many generators on the market can handle these types of short-term peak loads without damage, however, some of the other items that you have connected to them may not! The problem is that when a generator is overloaded what normally happens is that the output voltage reduces significantly and certain types of equipment (almost anything that is computerised) don't like significant voltage changes. For example, I have a five-year-old laptop that shuts down when a motorised device overloads the generator. A friend of mine actually burnt his laptop out when his camping fridge turned on (this was a $299 generator). I must state that with some of the more modern electronic generators (Honda quiet series, Yamaha etc) the problem is not as bad because their electronics can filter out some, but not all, of the voltage changes.

The first generator I bought was rated at 1 KVA; after some painful, and expensive, learning I ended up with a 6.5 KVA unit. I hope this advice has helped some of you to avoid making the same costly mistake.



The 1 KVA generator Peter bought.

The 6.5 KVA he should have bought! Selecting a generator is not always easy.

HANDY HINTS

• Start small petrol engines (lawn mowers, brush cutters etc) the easy way. Spray some Aerostart or Start Ya Bastard into the air cleaner before starting.

• If you have a ballpoint pen that will not write but still has ink in it, try touching the point in a gas flame for half a second.

• If the cap has been left off the top of a permanent making pen, try dipping the tip in some turps.

• Fitting a steering wheel cover can be awkward. Try leaving the cover in the hot sun for 10 minutes. Otherwise, push the cover onto part of the steering wheel where one of the spokes joins. Wrap around both sides with duct tape. Now you can finish pulling on without the cover coming back off. Then remove the duct tape.

Alexander Cranford, Hay.

A Horse For The Family And Farm

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

If yours is the sort of family in which everyone dreams of having a horse but the dollars will only stretch to one animal, a Morgan may be the answer. Equine devotee Judi Anderson from Ferntree Gully, Melbourne, says that although the breed is still relatively rare in Australia, partbreds are available. 'The Morgan is noted for its versatility', said Judi. 'These horses happily turn from showing to working cattle to pulling a vehicle to taking kids to pony club or just around the paddock, so one horse can pretty much do it all.'

Judi, who runs a secretariat business from home, keeps her 15-year-old Morgan gelding, Mt Tawonga Kiewa, on a friend's property in the Dandenong Ranges, half an hour's drive away. Her relationship with horses started as a kiddie with pony rides at St Kilda Beach, Melbourne, 50-plus years ago. She rode through her childhood and owned a couple of ponies. 'Having ridden on and off in adult years, I started riding regularly again about 20 years ago. I've only ever been a weekend rider who rides for pleasure. I joined my local adult riding club to learn more and for the social side as well as some small-scale competition', said Judi.

Why a Morgan? 'I had always been fascinated with the Morgan breed because all Morgans can trace back to one stallion foaled in America in the late 1780s. When I found we had Morgans in Australia I just had to have one', Judi said. 'Morgans are renowned in America as being excellent in harness too, an added bonus because I'd always wanted to do carriage driving and so took it up.'

'I loved driving Kiewa. I had a two-wheel gig and driving around the roads was such fun. Of course, some car drivers were inconsiderate, but Kiewa was very good with traffic and nothing seemed to upset him. The slow pace allowed me a chance to have some thinking time, to look at the views and people's gardens and everyone always wanted to have a chat. It gave me such pleasure to see the smiles on the faces of kids in passing cars; many had obviously never seen a horse-drawn vehicle before – perhaps the carriages giving rides in the centre of Melbourne or harness racing, but not just someone driving down a country road. I've had to go back to riding because of a shoulder injury, not horse related, and really miss the weekend driving', said Judi.

MORGAN DESCRIPTION

Morgans are generally in the 14 – 15.2 hand size range. They're attractive horses to look at, with pretty heads and short backs, and are well proportioned. The head is well defined with large, widely spaced eyes, small ears, a slightly dished nose and a small muzzle. Both the mane and tail are full and the neck is crested and held high. The main colours are bay, black, brown and chestnut.

TEMPERAMENT

Morgans are very people orientated, friendly, curious horses. Judi is adamant they also have a sense of humour! They're known for their intelligence, courage and good sense. 'You have to remember that no matter what characteristics a breed has, all horses are individuals, just like people', Judi advised.

WORKING ABILITY

'Morgans give you the impression that they thrive on hard work', Judi said. 'They are generally very strong and can happily carry adults as well as look after smaller children, making them an ideal family horse.' A team of mixed pure and partbred Morgans successfully competes in ploughing competitions

in New Zealand, winning against much bigger teams. In America, where the breed is more plentiful, they're still used in clearing land by pulling logs after trees are felled or pulling sleds loaded with rocks. They're also used on cattle ranches in the US. In Australia some owners use their horses for working stock on properties.

MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Morgans do well on grass without the need for expensive feeds or supplements, but good pasture management is still important, along with a worming program. Judi recommends regular farrier visits, about every six to eight weeks, because although the breed has good strong feet they need regular trimming even if they're not shod. An annual inspection by a horse dentist is sensible too; it will ensure the horse is able to process food properly. Morgans are generally tough and don't need a lot of pampering, but if you live in the colder, wetter parts of Australia your horse will appreciate a waterproof rug.

AVAILABILITY AND PRICE

Morgans are still relatively rare in Australia, with approximately 175 purebreds and 280 partbreds all up. They are in all states and territories with breeders established in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Partbreds generally resemble the Morgan side of their parentage because this breed is so prepotent.

Now for the important part, price. Expect to pay from $1000 upwards for a partbred and from around $4000 for a pure gelding. Prices for both pure and partbred breeding stock are higher.

FINAL ADVICE

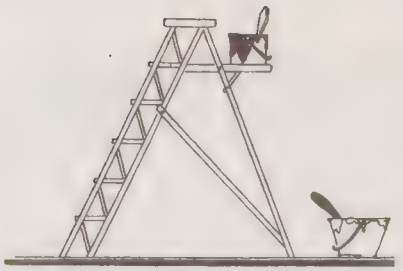
'This is a breed that does very well on little food so is not expensive to keep. Morgans are easy to handle, but if you have no prior experience with horses get help from a knowledgeable person; accidents can happen to inexperienced owners. If you like the look or sound of the breed, make some enquiries or plan to visit and see some. The Morgan really is a lovely breed', says Judi.

MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about Morgans, try the internet. The Morgan Horse Association of Australia (MHAA) has a website (www.morganhorse.com.au) that will show you Morgans doing all sorts of things, and give you a contact in your own state. For those without access to a computer, you could write to the Association through Judi (PO Box 7108, Upper Ferntree Gully 3156). For information about carriage driving, contact the Australian Carriage Driving Association – www.acds.org.au – their committee changes (as does MHAA's) from year to year, but they could probably be contacted through their journal editor, Mrs Dot Willcoxson, 'Witwood', Kings Highway, Braidwood 2622, ph/fax: 02-4842-7164.

Opposite page: Morgan breeder Jenny Bird works her cattle with imported purebreed stallion Marvellous Encore.
Above: Judi Anderson driving her purebred Morgan gelding Mt Tawonga Kiewa.

Painting Pointers



by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

Before beginning a painting job you need to work out how much paint you require and it's important to be aware of some safety procedures.

HOW MUCH PAINT IS ENOUGH?

Good quality paint is expensive and, while some leftovers are useful for future touch-up repairs, you don't want to be left with unused tins of it at the end of a project. On the other hand, buying too little initially can result in slight, but infuriating, differences in colour. These simple guidelines will help you calculate how much you need to buy so money is not wasted on unnecessarily large quantities and you do end up with a uniform colour match.

• Measure the dimensions of the walls to be painted and multiply height by width.

• Do the same for areas you won't be painting, or will be painting a different colour, such as windows and doorways.

• Subtract the second area from the first to give you the total area that requires painting.

• Look on the label of the paint can at the information about spread rate, which will usually be between 10 and 16 square metres per litre.

• Divide the total area to be painted by the spread rate to work out how many litres you need to buy for each coat – it's always best to apply at least two coats for durability and full richness of colour.

There are some other variables you might need to take into account. Some masonry surfaces are very porous and will absorb more paint, in which case the spread rate will be lower and a third coat might also be needed. Roller application is easier, but brushing applies a heavier coat that better hides old colours beneath.

Any leftover paint should be stored in a well-sealed can so it doesn't dry out before it's needed for touch-ups. Some people store the cans upside down so any skin forms on the bottom of the paint and doesn't leave lumpy residues when you next use it.

PAINTING SAFETY

Any handyperson job entails a risk of accidents, especially for the inexperienced. The Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute recommends the following precautions to ensure your home-workplace safety.

• Wear gloves, safety glasses and a dust mask for the appropriate tasks.

• Wear cloth gloves for surface preparation: scraping, wire-brushing, sanding, patching and working with splintered wood.

• Wear rubber gloves of the type that won't melt in contact with volatile compounds when working with bleach, paint removers, acids, thinners and mineral spirits.

• Wear safety glasses or goggles when wire-brushing, scraping, sanding, painting overhead, and when handling bleach, acids or other harsh chemicals.

• Wear a dust mask when sanding.

• Use an organic vapour respirator when spray painting.

• Wear comfortable loose-fitting clothing and rubber-soled nonslip shoes for ladder safety.

• Ensure ladders are free of dirt and paint build-up that could slip underfoot.

• Take all care and follow manufacturers' directions when using any power tools.

• Wear sturdy rubber gloves and ensure good ventilation when using solvents.

• Never mix volatile chemical products as toxic fumes can result.

• Prevent spontaneous combustion of rags or paper that have been used to clean up solvents by immersing them in water then storing in a fireproof container until you can dispose of them.

Adapted from the Rohm and Haas Paint Quality Institute's *DIY Painting Guide.*

For more information you can check out these websites:
• www.paintquality.com.au
• www.paintquality.co.nz

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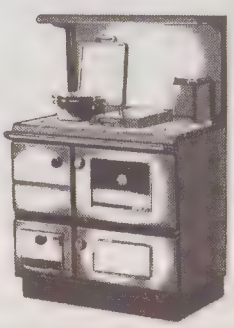

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Bottling Fruit In The Microwave

by Margery & Margaret Robson, Leongatha, Vic.

When you have a glut of home-grown fruit, please don't waste it, preserve it for lean times. You can bottle the fruit, or make jam, jelly, chutney or sauce.

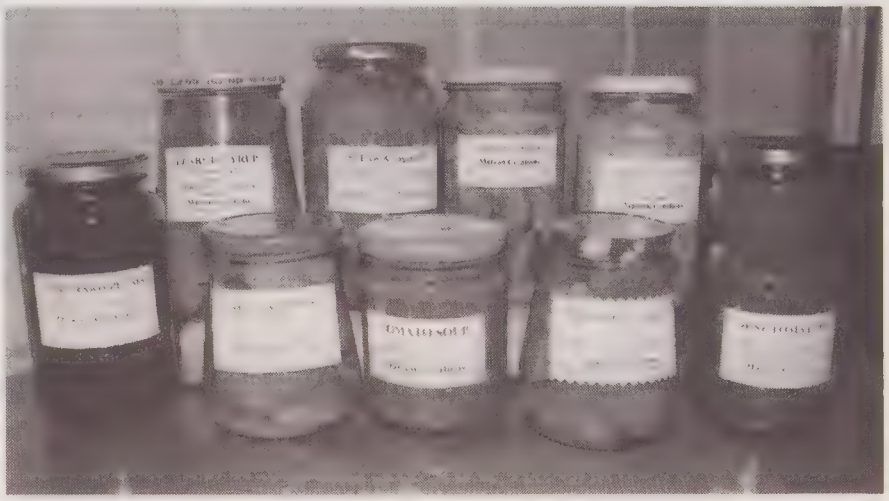
Here's how we bottle fruit the Marson way, in the microwave. Save all pop-top lidded jars in the months leading up to the harvest season. Ensure they are very clean and remove all labels, glue and printed batch details. Wash in very hot soapy water, rinse in clear and sterilise in the oven on low heat.

Pick the fruit off the tree when it is firm; fruit is better slightly underripe than overripe. Wash it. If possible, remove the stones. Cut around the crease and twist one half off the stone, then perhaps quarter the other half.

Pack into jars, placing the halves on the bottom and using the quarters to fill in smaller gaps. Pack to above the top of the jar.

Prepare syrup in a separate saucepan. Measure one cup water to one cup sugar. Stir to ensure it doesn't burn. Bring to the boil and keep boiling. If you prefer your syrup not so sweet, reduce the amount of sugar.

Place the jar of fruit in a dish (because a dish is cooler to remove) and cook in a microwave oven (ours is 625 watts), *without the lid*, for two to two and a half minutes on high, depending on the size of the jar and the ripeness of the fruit. Smaller jars may only need one and a half to two minutes. Larger jars may need three minutes.



Remove from the microwave and fill the jar to the top with boiling syrup. Screw pop-top lid onto jar tightly, pushing the fruit down to screw the lid on.

Take care, boiling syrup is hot. Handle very carefully. Place on a wooden board to cool, not onto a cold stainless steel sink; jars will crack if the heat contrast is too great. Wipe the jars to remove any spilt syrup.

The fruit will continue to cook in the syrup as it cools. When the pop-top 'pops' down, the jar is sealed completely. It should keep almost indefinitely.

Label jars with the contents, when you bottled it and where you got the fruit. In other words, info you require to boast about, because if you are preserving many batches of different fruits you will forget which, when, how and who!

If there is any leftover syrup, allow it to cool, then pour into a jar and keep in the fridge for the next batch.

Any fruit can be preserved this way; pop-tops are the best invention since sliced bread.

If bottling apricots, we would crack some of the stones, blanch the kernels, and put them in the jar with the fruit. This gives a lovely nutty flavour. Nectarines and pears are delightful. We found it easier to cut pears into chunks rather than slice them.

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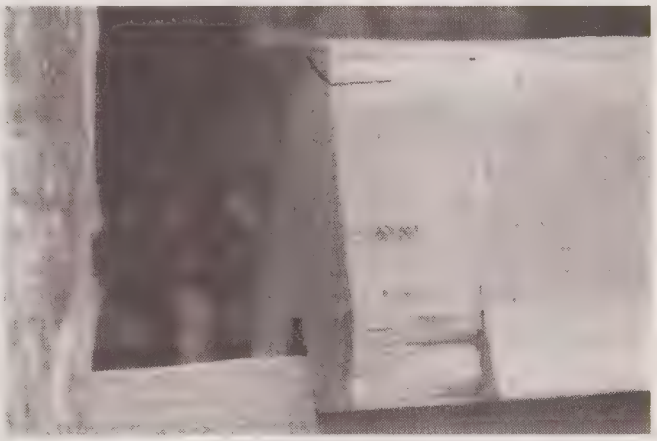
Building a Radial Timber Fence

by Ann Bolch, Emerald, Vic.



The ad read: 'This is a fence that needs little or no carpentry skills because drop segments fix together without fixings'. Sounded too easy.

You'd think I would've wondered, as I ordered nine 250 x 2000-millimetre poles, how I was going to get them from the driveway to the back of the block, given the block rises about 7 metres over a distance of 43. But I didn't. And when the truck pulled up with tree trunks up to 420 millimetres diameter, almost twice as wide as I'd ordered, I did a bit of a flip.

It had sounded like such a practical, rustic, environmentally friendly project, but was now becoming frustrating. Draught horses? Where from? Mechanical advantage? Maybe. Levitation? Just kidding. Slaves? Now there's an idea!

After many worried days and nights, I decided on the latter. And so it was that on Anzac Day we really got into the spirit of helping out your mates and turned on a barbecue for those mates willing to come up to the hills and lug logs. All the while we worried that not enough friends would turn up and those who did would do damage to their backs trying to achieve the task.

Only 10 people could walk comfortably beside each log and, for the heavier logs, this was only just enough people. With good communication, strong friends and plenty of rests, this method of getting the logs up the slope was achievable. We were grateful that 14 people had turned up so not everyone had to lift every log.

So, with the posts and drop segments ready to go at the back of the block, it was time to start digging holes. Hiring a Dingo digger with an auger attachment made even more of a mess of the muddy yard, but managed to dig nine holes quickly and somehow avoid major fruit tree, black wattle, blackwood and mountain ash roots. The logs dropped into the 600-millimetre holes pretty easily and a fair degree of jimmying with the crowbar got them central to both the hole and the fence line. After that, radial timber fencing is

Ten people at a time moved the logs without too much strain.

dead easy. The quarter-sawn boards have a rebate cut into them so they slot together (see photo) and the drop segments slot into the rebated posts (see photo). Boards slot into posts, creating a solid fence that has its own pattern in the wood.

I had been warned by forester mates that silver top ash (which is mostly what is cut at the radial timber sawmill) is prone to insect infestation, so I endeavoured to prevent invasion by using two treatments, both of which can be used on certified organic farms. This was particularly important for our fence because of its proximity to the vegies and fruit trees. I painted boards with the timber preservative copper napthenate oil, which is recommended to prevent several types of fungus and borer, and drilled a product called No-Rot into the base of the posts to help control fungal and termite damage.

The radial timber sawmill only uses regrowth or plantation hardwoods and the radial method of cutting timber uses 100 percent of the log. This won our favour, given the terrible waste occurring with industrial timber harvesting at present.

On this occasion I wanted a solid fence because, after many neighbourly promises of controlling his noxious weeds, our neighbour still wasn't doing so. I had costed Colorbond fencing and the radial timber option ended up being slightly more expensive, given that the Colorbond quote included erection. The radial timber fence regularly gets compliments for its rustic and rural look, which provides an attractive backdrop to the yard. It's been two years since it was built and it is weathering well.

If you want a solid timber fence that's least harmful to the environment and doesn't need superior fencing skills, radial timber fencing is the answer. Just make sure you can work out a way of getting the logs to your site!

Want To Know More?

Radial Timber Contacts

Radial Timber Sales Pty Ltd, 60-72 Garden Rd, Clayton 3168. Ph: 03-9558-4111. Fax: 03-9558-4145. Email: sales@radialtimber.com Website: www.radialtimber.com

Note: for good diagrams of drop segments with rebated wedges, please see www.radialtimber.com/products/wedgpanspec.htm or refer to photos.

Preschem Contacts

Preschem Ltd, 147-149 Cheltenham Rd, Cheltenham 3192. Ph: 03-9532-0679. Fax: 03-9532-1041. Website: www.preschem.com

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Bush Kids

by June Birkett, Crystal Creek, NSW.

Born in a tin shed in 1940, I joined the world in the middle of World War II in a dairy farm area of Prospect, NSW. My mother had four of her five children at home without aid of any painkillers and it was rough. The tin shed had a bedroom on one end and an open fire for cooking at the other end. By today's standards it was Third World, but in the bush in 1940s Australia such conditions were pretty common.

For a short time Dad had a job where he was given large empty tar drums and he and my oldest brother worked side by side opening them up to build a tin shed from, and our family of seven moved in. This new home was more sturdy than the previous railway tent that we had lived in for two years.

The tin shed, of course, had no bathroom, but hands and faces and feet were washed in a dish daily and once a week a copper full of hot water was boiled and bath water was shared, one after another, until the family was through. Privacy was not a problem in the bush; a hessian bag split in two often made a door.

How did people manage in those days to raise very large families and to be such hard workers? One point that must be stressed is that everything in those days required effort. We all worked from as young as we could remember and playtime was snatched between jobs. We walked miles to schools, up and down hills, often wearing out shoes in a short time, and then we went bare-footed wherever we could.

Jobs were shared: my oldest brother would cut down a tree, Dad would cut it up, I would take the wood to the fireplace and Mum would light and keep the fire burning.

We all gardened. Dad was a market gardener and grew all sorts of small vegetable crops and flowers for a stall at Martin Place. We children were the pickers, even the youngest members of the family. Animals were a great part of those early family years. We had a dog for protection, cats, tortoises and often rabbits, which were in plague proportions at that time. We had every sort of wild bird to watch as well. Butterflies and moths were abundant and catching them was another pastime, for we did not have any sprays then and moth larvae ate our garden, which was so necessary for food.

We definitely ate more vegetables than we did meat as we only had the old meat safe outside under the cool of the trees. It is surprising, though, how well those meat safes worked. All bush homes had a cow or two and milk, cream, cheese and butter were all natural, with no additives.

The clothesline was strung from one tree to another with heavy wire and a prop. Clothes were boiled in a copper tub, then rinsed and hung out in the open air. Almost everything – bedding, mats, curtains – was aired regularly. Life was hard work, but the pattern of days was mostly unbroken, so it was easier to follow.

Going into debt was a last resort. If you could not afford it, you did not have it. As a result, families did not have a heavy debt load hanging over them. My folks would have been horrified at today's practice of buying things you do not need and using a credit card to run up unnecessary debt. Everything had a purpose. My mother used to scrub the concrete floor of the outside loo with whitestone and it would come up white and clean. There were no poisonous cleaners then, nothing but elbow grease.

Children were less bored as playtime was precious. The odd trip to town to see a Disney movie involved a long bus ride and an even longer walk. The very occasional circuses were so magical, so big and real with elephants and lions and horses, that I still remember them.

Homework for kids was almost unknown in the primary school years. Children learnt reading, writing and arithmetic and were taught by mother and father, sisters or brothers. The skills of cooking and clothes making we learnt from our mother's side; while woodwork, building and gardening were taught by our father. Almost all clothes were made by my mother, which, looking back, was a huge task for a large family.

All girls learnt to knit, sew and patch at a very early stage. Arts and crafts skills were essential as they were often a training for a job later in life. Mats were needed for the cold wooden floors. We would make them with a large cotton reel and wool or string, making a long coil, then winding and stitching it around in a huge circle.

The way people lived wasted nothing and left resources for others. Water was never wasted – we had rain tanks or carried buckets from the creeks. Clothes were passed down, then cut down. Shoes were handed on or mended. Wool was recycled until it could not be reused. Food leftovers were made into meals or used as food for animals.

Bush kids seldom complained – it was not the way – and we seldom felt scared to walk the paddocks, day or night. I enjoyed being raised as a bush kid; it was a safe, secure world where children were protected. We rode horses, bush-picnicked, caught fish or yabbies, made our own dams or mud pies or pottery. We walked for miles and developed a great love of the Australian bush. I sincerely hope any children who still have a modern approximation of this way of life really appreciate their luck.

Calling bush kids. We'd love to hear how your life in the bush today differs from June's in the past, and in what ways it is similar.

Livestock Health and Management

Information You Need but Haven't Known Where to Ask

If you have queries on any type of livestock send them in and we'll get our panel of experts to research the problem for you. Post them to Livestock Advice Page, Grass Roots, PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

LAME CHOOKS

Many thanks for printing my letter regarding chooks going lame, I've only ever experienced them going lame after inadvertently giving them pumpkin seeds to eat, though my wife insists any part of raw pumpkin makes them lame.

In my experience and my late grandmother's it's only been the seeds!

Lionel,
PIANGIL 3597.

We haven't heard of this connection before and certainly haven't noticed leg problems when hens have had pumpkin. We'll be more watchful. Would it have something to do with the pumpkin variety?

PEAFOWL NONPERFORMANCE

Loved the peafowl story and info last issue, but now we need help. Our three pairs of peafowl are kept enclosed in a large pen and to date there is no sign of displaying or egg laying. We keep them enclosed because we've lost them to foxes in past years, especially the hens, who set in secret places that must be easy for foxes to access. It's spring, why are the birds glum and inactive?

Sandra Day,
WAGGA WAGGA 2650.

The key to the situation may well be that they are depressed as well as glum and either feel too confined to strut and display or the social hierarchy doesn't allow for three displaying males in such a small area. Peafowl don't normally pair off, so a ratio of one male to one female is overkill. Remember that peahens are fussy, discerning birds and their inactivity will be due to the fact none of the males interest them. They will want to see the males in full display doing their coquettish little dance before they compare attributes and decide which male is biggest, best and worthy of their favours. Reduce the number of males to one or be prepared to let the flock out late afternoon for a browse and an opportunity to show off. If you feel they won't return to the pen, consider clipping the feathers on one wing, which should unbalance them when they try to fly, or keep them hungry on the day they are to be allowed some freedom and rattle the food tin well before dusk to lure them into the pen. If the pen has no undercover for nests, the hens won't want to lay there, so set up nesting sites by grouping a couple of hay bales together or large branches that have enough foliage for the hen to hide her eggs under. Good luck!

SHEEP PROBLEMS

We're sick of trying to find a shearer each year to shear our handful of sheep, would it be more sensible to switch to a naturally shedding breed? Our girls are quiet and allow us to trim hooves and even perform an amateur crutching job when necessary. Quiet sheep are top priority; could we get the same friendly nature in shedding sheep?

Joan & Ken,
MITTAGONG 2575.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find people who are prepared to shear 'backyard' sheep. Keep looking and asking and see if you can combine with another local small flock to make it worth the shearer's time. Dorpers and Wiltshire Horns are the main shedding breeds and both can be a tad flighty because they are not handled as frequently as woolled sheep, which may need wigging and crutching between annual shearing. It's regular handling and yarding and

even hand-feeding that will quieten sheep rather than a specific breed being more or less tractable.

Do You Keep
RARE BREEDS?
We want you!

For our
Poultry Breeders Directory
Send a stamped SAE for an entry form to:
PBD, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR ANIMALS

$98 Pet Power Pack First Aid Kit
$138 with flea, worming & heartworm prevention, plus book.
$40 only for flea, worming and heartworm energy.

Please contact Jackie Fitzgerald for other products available.

Jackie Fitzgerald: Homoeopath, Herbologist, Reiki Master.
Shop 4, 658 Pittwater Rd, Brookvale, NSW 2100, Australia.
Ph: 02-8902-3010 Fax: 02-9939-0404 Mobile: 0425-221-646

CLEANER DIESEL

Traditionally, diesel engines have had more economical fuel consumption and produced less carbon dioxide than petrol engines, but have been renowned for high levels of dangerous emissions, including particulates. Newer diesel engines, however, are changing this perception. Advances in engine design have improved the efficiency, lowered the noise level and vastly decreased polluting emissions.

The Federal Government's Department of Industry, Science and Resources has trialled a diesel-engined Citroen C5 run on a combination of 80 percent canola oil and 20 percent tallow. As well as being a renewable fuel capable of reducing dependence on diminishing oil supplies, this fuel is greenhouse gas friendly and reduces carbon dioxide emissions.

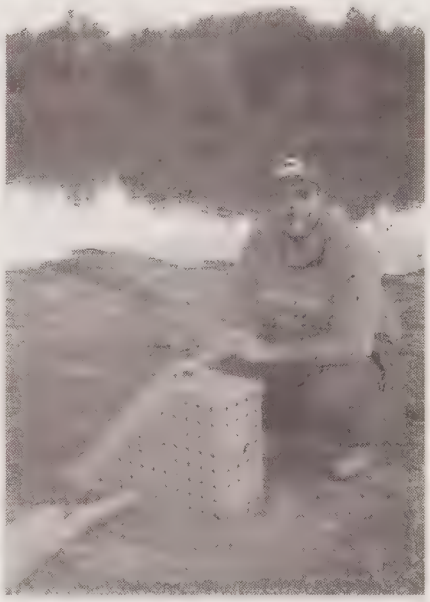
SAFER TERMITE CONTROL

Scientists have discovered a new anti-termite treatment extracted from a native plant: a species of Erimophila. The breakthrough came about when a landowner noticed an undamaged fence post surrounded by termite-infested posts. Analysis revealed the species of plant the post was from and enabled researchers to extract the termite-repelling substance. Field trials have so far been successful in showing the efficacy of the treatment against three species of termites found in NSW. Further trials are to be undertaken to find out how effective the new extract is against a giant tropical species of termite.

The extract is not yet available to the public, but if further trials are successful developers anticipate that it will be used as a termite barrier under houses, as a direct killing means, and as a timber impregnation to replace copper-based products.

POLLUTING AIR TRAVEL

According to a researcher in the UK, emissions of CO^2 from a predicted quadrupling in air travel in that country over the next decades could undermine any benefits of other reductions. To neutralise the greenhouse gas emissions of air travel, CO^2 emissions from all other sources – households, motor vehicles and business – would need to be reduced to zero.



Leith Hawkins from Greening Australia.

FISHY PROBLEMS

The world's oceans are not immune from the sorts of environmental problems that beset the land. Unsustainable fishing practices and pollutants are taking their toll. A recent survey of grocery stores spanning 22 states in the US, for example, found that over half the swordfish steaks analysed contained levels of mercury above the legal limit of one part per million.

Meanwhile, deep-sea sharks off north-west Europe are under threat from unregulated fishing. These sharks breed very slowly so populations are unable to recover from excessive fishing. Since 1992 numbers are believed to have fallen by 80 percent. Some boats set nearly 9000 kilometres of gill nets at a time, but fish are removed so infrequently that up to two-thirds of the catch is already rotten and ends up being dumped. Another problem is caused by discarded nets, which can continue to catch fish for years. The most worrying aspect is that this type of fishing is legal, a situation that seems unlikely to change in the near future.

REEF PROTECTION

The story of sediment and nutrient runoff damaging the Great Barrier Reef by killing coral and reducing biodiversity is not new. There is good news, however, in the form of over half a million dollars of government funding to rectify the problem in the Bowen-Broken catchment, which has been identified as a major risk to the health of the Reef because of land management methods in inland grazing areas. It is recognised that solving land management problems of erosion and overfertilisation will benefit graziers as well as have a positive impact on the Reef.

Project funding has been used to fence off river banks to prevent erosion; improve paddock water supplies so stock do not congregate, which leads to uneven grazing and soil erosion; and run workshops on using heavy machinery so as to limit sediment runoff. In addition, land management courses for farmers, trials of livestock management methods and evaluation of benefits and impacts on landscape health have been undertaken.

On another front, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has a program for schools, called the Reef Guardian Schools Program, involving over 120 schools. A recent project was to supply calico bags to 55 Reef Guardian schools to encourage people away from plastic bag use as so many bags end up in the ocean and harming marine life. Children designed Reef protection images, which they printed or painted onto the calico. Schools throughout Australia can become involved in the Guardians program.

To find out more about the Bowen-Broken Project contact Leith Hawkins on 07-4761-3623, or email: lhawkins@qld.greeningaustralia.org.au For information about the Reef Guardian Schools Program contact Angela Colliver on 07-4750-0850, or visit the website: www.reefed.edu.au

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hello Grass Roots Folks,

What a great resource this magazine is; I've been reading it for a decade or more and I'm always sorry to finish it. We are a family with three children and one well-behaved dog, moving from Maryborough, Victoria, to Townsville, Queensland, in October this year. We are looking for a home to rent or care for long term, with access to schools and kinders. Does anyone have suggestions, or tips for **TROPICAL PERMACULTURE** and conservation? It would be wonderful to live in a rural area.

I have been a horticulturist for many years and am looking forward to tropical diversity after seeing other parts of Australia. Raoul and I will both be looking for local work. We could look after limited amounts of animals. Maybe someone needs our help too? Looking forward to meeting some warm Queensland folks.

Kat, Raoul, Joel, Celeste & James,
224 Gladstone St, MARYBOROUGH 3465.

Dear GRs,

If anyone is looking for somewhere to move to, Terowie is a relaxed and friendly country town, a place to go back in time and explore the past. Located in the mid north of SA, Terowie is well known for the railway network, which began in the late 1880s. Before the railway started, horses and bullock wagons brought supplies to Terowie and transported produce from the area. Though it gets hot in summer, the old stone cottages stay cool and in winter crackling open fires provide warmth.

On the outskirts of Terowie is the Pandappa Conservation Park. Here you can explore tourist routes and back roads meandering through bushland with a beauty of its own. Along these roads you will come across old homesteads and disused shearing sheds that portray the old style of living. Wildlife includes emus, kangaroos and wombats, and even wild goats across the hills and plains. The views are breathtaking, with sunsets in particular being worth seeing. It is a peaceful area to sit back and listen to the birds.

When we first came to Terowie it seemed deserted. We found it instead to be a place of friendly people. The school still runs with a small number of pupils, enabling it to give one-on-one attention, and has good community support.

The town's streets are quiet, with little traffic. On a warm summer night you can sit back, enjoy the peace and look at the stars. Occasionally, locals will walk past and stop for a chat. In the main street you can still see the shops of times gone by, many in ruins but still displaying their old signs. Some of the verandahs still have the rings on them where horses used to be tied up. A few of the old shops have been restored to provide a general store and tea rooms for locals and tourists.

The old blacksmith shop is now a museum, displaying all the tools once used. There are two other museums in Terowie where you can see displays of clothes, photos and household items left behind by people long gone. The original building in town was a pub, which is still open for business today and is an important meeting place.

Terowie is a magical place of history that we enjoy living in, a place of beauty and things to see.

Tamara Hornsby,
PO Box 8, TEROWIE 5421.

Dear GRs,

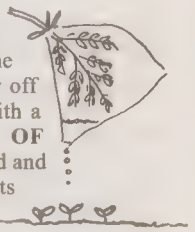
What a great magazine! Came across it by accident and have to say it really fills a niche. Now down to business. My partner David and I have finally taken stock of our current lifestyle and decided that it is no longer suitable to our wants and needs. A couple of years ago we bought just over **SEVEN ACRES IN TOOGOOLAWAH** (not far from Esk) to have as a weekend getaway camping with our kids. Well the kids have all flown the nest and

we figured that we love it so much when we are out there, why not live there permanently? Our plans won't come to fruition for another year or so yet, but we want to get a step up on things before we make the actual move, such as preparing vegetable beds, planting fruit trees etc. We plan to be as environmentally cohesive as possible – having no power or water was a great starting point for the choice of solar power and rainwater! Here's where we need help: Although we have a vegie garden here in the city and do our best, our expertise in being self-sufficient needs a bit of a helping hand. Heeeelp! Anyone who has made the 'tree' change and would like to pass on their expertise, failures (change that to learning curves!), opinions etc would be greatly appreciated. I have plans (David wonders if they might be a bit grandiose!) to preserve vegetables, use what produce I have for bartering (if possible), make my own jams, chutneys, soaps, raise chickens (of which we already have three) and much more. Can anyone tell me if it is possible to use greywater on vegetables and other edible plants? I will personally answer all letters.

Andrea Gibson-Smith,
10 Vista Crt, CAPALABA 4157.

Greywater should not come into direct contact with anything you eat, thus it can be used on fruit trees, but not on most vegies, and should never come into contact with leafy greens that are eaten uncooked. Greywater can affect the soil chemistry and biology, so should not be used exclusively on any area, but be alternated with clean water.

Dear GR Readers,



I have tied a large clear plastic bag onto a heavily foliaged branch of a tree 1.7 metres from the ground. Water collects in the bag, due to the heat from the sun. I have cut the bottom corner off the bag, where the water collects, and tied it with a rubber band. When there is a **BUILD-UP OF WATER** in the bag, I then release the rubber band and allow the water to drain onto the vegetable plants below the bag. This idea can be used on other heavily foliaged branches around the garden.

Troy Delaney,
93 Bellevue Rd, FIGTREE 2525.

Hi Everyone,

I have been a reader now for 20 years so thought it was about time I wrote. We have finally acquired **20 ACRES NEAR MILLMERRAN** and are hoping there are some GR readers nearby we could chat with and, hopefully, learn from their experiences. We want to move onto the land as soon as we can. Can anyone advise us on what we can and can't do? Is there any way around having to put in a council-approved septic toilet and tanks? Am I allowed to move on if I have an Ecolet one?

It's taken me 30 years to get this close to living my dream. At present I'm in Gumlu working in a packing shed, packing capsicums and rockmelons. I've been doing seasonal work for the past nine years and there's not much I haven't picked or packed now. The season ends here in November and then I'm hoping we can move straight onto the land. We would like to hear from anyone who has done it and could advise us the best way to go about it.

At present we are thinking about getting one of those trendy cottages put on it in a few years, but for now we only have our caravan.

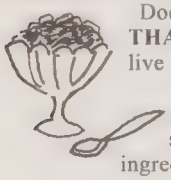
Thanks for a great mag and keep them coming!

Tanya Moore,
C/- Post Office, BOWEN 4805.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hello Everyone,

A few weeks ago I saw an interesting but effective method for **TREATING WHITE FLY**. Get a bright yellow plastic container and smother it with thick layers of Vaseline (put the container right side up or the Vaseline might wash away in the rain). Hang in, or place near, the branches of the tree. The white fly are attracted to yellow and will, hopefully, smother themselves. Also, I learnt from personal experience that if you urinate in a container (till about three-quarters of the way), slugs and snails will drink themselves to death in the urine (must taste like white wine, those alcoholics!). I have found this to work just like beer.



Does anyone have a list of **FRUITS AND VEGIES THAT TOLERATE COLDER CLIMATES**? We live in the Yarra Valley in Victoria.

One last thing: Chocolate 'moose'. Take two avocados, four bananas, two to three tablespoons cocoa, honey to sweeten. Blend ingredients together and eat. Yum!

Caliopy Greenwood,
7 Christine St, MILLGROVE 3799.
Email: lil_billberry@yahoo.com.au

Dear Grass Roots,

Perhaps some readers might be interested to know, if they suffer from **LEG CRAMPS**, that after 24 years of painful leg cramps I haven't had any since March 2004. I was advised to wriggle toes and ankles whenever I sat down. I am very active; having no car I walk a lot, but evidently the extra foot exercises have eliminated the cramps as I take no medication.

PH,
PYMBLE 2073.

Dear Grass Roots,

We had hoped to have written earlier, but I have not found the time. Everything is going well (except for the washing machines!) All of our plants, including the gum trees, are thinking it is already spring, with blossoms everywhere. We had a lovely drop of unseasonable rain in June and now the days' temperatures are nice and mild; even the birds are confused.

We are very pleased with our **NATURE LOO** composting toilet. It has now been in place for eight months with no odour problems. We have needed to boost the composting process. This has been done by adding lime, sawdust and the occasional container of compost material.

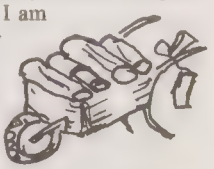
Our **SOLAR POWER** is going great. We have plenty of power as long as we are careful and watch what we are doing. All of our lighting is 12 volts and is much better lighting than 240 volts. We have two over the stove, two over the sink, two in the eating area and two in the bedroom (downlights). When we extend we will add another four downlights. Outside we have one over the barbecue and one in the bathroom/toilet. We run the fan for the toilet 24 hours. This is all our 12-volt usage for the moment. We are adding a car radio/CD to this shortly. We also have the Invertek 1800-watt inverter. This is switched off to standby unless we wish to use 240 volts. We charge our batteries with this inverter and have found it works very well. Our 240-volt appliance that operates through this is the TV/video. We do have a 240/12-volt TV, but are running it on 240 volts. It works very well on 12 volts and the only reason it is on 240 volts is that it has a handy plug. It is a much more energy efficient TV.

We have found the laptop computer works efficiently on 12/240 volts. The personal computer is extremely power hungry. The other surprise was that the plug-in chargers (phone, LCD screens, torch) are also very power hungry. We now only charge these items in the car or when the generator is on.

For our 12-volt system we have decided that the fan for the toilet would benefit from having its own power supply. We also rely on gas refrigeration and this is working well, but we wish to switch to 12 volts. After a lot of research and thought, we like the IndelB products and will be saving for a fridge and freezer. After setting up our solar and maintaining the same, Ray is now studying renewable energy.

Now to the washing machines! I had put off purchasing one, but with the cooler weather and the water oh so cold, the time had come to bite the bullet. Then we were given two machines. No guarantees. Tried out the first one and everything went well for the first few loads, then on the rinse cycle the spinner stopped working. Back to hand-wringing. We picked up the second machine and checked it over. Gave it a clean and rinsed it out. So far so good. Filled it up and away it went for about 20 seconds. Clouds of smoke everywhere. Back to the old bucket again. I am now starting to get a bit of a reputation around washing machine circles.

I have mentioned previously that I am a chronic pain life member. I am very pleased that life is still progressing. I can now split a wheelbarrow of wood. I walk every day and I am very much more physical. I have stopped my 20 minutes a day exercise program as a program and now instead do these exercises while doing my everyday tasks. My handwriting still suffers and I apologise to those who have read it. As a result of research into my condition, I completed a Diploma in Vitamin and Nutrition Therapy (with honours). My family and friends have successfully used a lot of the information I gained. I am now considering hanging out a shingle.



I'll pass on some interesting information on a subject we have experienced first-hand. For those who are **VEGAN OR VEGETARIAN** (my sister is one), I suggest obtaining a list of foods with their vitamin values. Please monitor your **VITAMIN B INTAKE**. My grandfather has difficulty in absorbing this vitamin. Vitamin B is mainly found in meat. He now suffers from severe dementia, epilepsy, minor strokes, vascular problems, heart weakness and eyesight problems. As has been explained to us all, it is a direct result of vitamin B deficiencies. My sister now takes Mega B supplement and we all observe our vitamin B intake. Believe it or not, vitamin B also helps with animals in maintaining their eyesight.

Now for a more pleasant subject. I am writing this under a blue sky with a few small clouds, trees with leaves glinting in the sun. Our paradise. We would like to offer to GR people the opportunity to see what we are doing. If you would like to find out if this is the life you want, contact us. If you would like any info on any of the previous, please feel free to write either snail mail or email us.

Ray & Terry,
409 Coverty Rd, COVERTY 4613.
Email: rayterry@bigpond.com

Dear Grass Roots,

I have just read Feedback from the last magazine, and thought I would reply to Ann and Bill Knight, re their enquiry for **PSYLLIUM SEEDS**. We have psyllium available. I find that *Plantago ovata*, the pink-brown seedling variety, grows well. Seed packets are $4.95 each and $1.80 handling and post.

Isabell Shipard,
PO Box 66, NAMBOUR 4560.

Contributors and correspondents who want letters or articles returned are requested to include correct postage.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Hello Fellow Friends of Planet Earth,

I read with great interest the letters and articles from people who espouse the organic way of life. I do have a real concern though with regard to those who insist that they do not use chemicals. But at the same time they inform us that they treat their pests and diseases with such things as neem oil, pyrethrum, white oil and many other nonsynthetic chemicals. These **CHEMICALS ARE POISONS** used to kill something. I strongly advise that even these supposedly harmless chemicals be used with caution.

Yes, we do have to have some way of dealing with unwanted pests and diseases, especially if we are growing produce commercially, but a poison is a poison regardless of how it was developed. Organic or nonorganic, synthetic or natural, they are still able to cause people and wildlife to become ill. I would like to know if there have been studies done to ensure that these products are harmless in long-term usage and whether they are target specific or target general.

My own gardens are infested with **AFRICAN BLACK BEETLES** and I am very hesitant to use any chemicals on them. I am hoping that with soil improvement and hard work I can eradicate them, or at least bring them under control.

Also, we have a small block of land within the Katanning Shire in WA. We have left this land to revert to local native flora and fauna. We received a letter from the Katanning Shire informing us that we had an outbreak of **CAPE TULIP** on the property and, as it was a declared plant, we were required to eradicate ASAP. They included with their letter a list of chemicals we should use. Just the names sound really bad. Can anyone suggest some other way to deal with these unwanted invaders permanently and quickly? We can, of course, dig each one out and place it so it cannot grow any more, but this requires a lot of time and presence away from our home farm; it may be our only option though.

Christine Brown,
RMB 215, KARRIDALE 6288.

Dear GRs,

Have searched my GR 'stash', but cannot find any **RECIPE FOR CRISPBREAD** or diet-type biscuits, particularly Dutch crispbakes. I hope some of you can help.

Mrs E Lourandos,
PO Box 4152, HAWKER 2614.
Email: nikity@goldweb.com.au

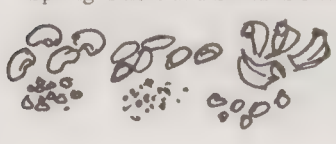
Dear Megg, Suni & GR Friends,

To **RID BROCCOLI OF THE WEE BEASTIES** residing therein soak the heads in well-salted water for 10 minutes. It works wonders. I have been asked quite a few times how to grow broccoli without an invasion of grubs. My advice is to grow lots and some will be left untouched. Two dozen plants is a good number. Broccoli freezes well and, once salted and cleaned, can be given away, so there is little waste. At least that advice is good for the cool tablelands where I live.

In the Grassifieds, Denise requested **ADVICE ABOUT ARTHRITIS**. I had a neighbour once who was crippled with arthritis. Her Macquarie Street specialist advised her not to eat bread. He said it was poison to arthritic people. She followed his advice and was much improved.

Thanks to Marjorie Bligh for her chocolate cake recipe, I am about to try it out.

Spring is here and **SEED SOWING** time has arrived. Here are a few tips to make the task easier. Be sure the seed is as fresh as possible. If you save your own seeds, treat them carefully. Don't expose to



light or heat! Sealed envelopes in an airtight tin is a good storage method. For people who have trouble raising carrot seed: Rake a shallow trench and firm it down with a piece of timber, or whatever, sow the seed into the damp, firmed ground, cover lightly with fine soil and cover with hessian bags. Keep the bags damp and check that the ground underneath does not dry out. Once the seed emerges, remove the bags. Keep the newly emerged seedlings damp but not soaked. Hessian bags are the secret of raising any seeds. It takes a bit of water to penetrate the bags so keep checking. Remove as soon as the seeds emerge.

Sparrows can be a real nuisance at this time of the year as they love newly emerged seedlings. Milk cartons cut in half and placed over each seedling will protect from sparrows and slugs and snails. Anchor each carton down with a small stick. Where there are many seeds, as in a bean or pea row, bird netting is worth investing in, it's also handy to protect fruit from birds. Happy gardening.

Country Woman,
URALLA 2358.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

For several months now I have been intending to share with other GR readers a simple and cheap way to **COMBAT HEAD LICE**. My daughter first suffered the inconvenience of head lice in year one, and also experienced the indignity of being sent home from school midway through the day to undergo the complete louse solution and hair wash. I found the head lice solution to be quite expensive and began to wonder how I was going to afford any more.

Then one evening after my daughter had her bath, she decided to try some of my hair styling mousse, which she brushed through her freshly washed hair. She then applied another generous amount of styling mousse to her hair the next morning before she went to school. She is now in year three and has continued to use the styling mousse every day. During that time she has not had any further problems with head lice.

So at around $1.67 for a 250-gram bottle of ordinary styling mousse, my daughter appears to have come up with the most cheaply priced and easy-to-use head lice solution. A nurse friend also recommended me to occasionally use about one teaspoon of kerosene mixed in with baby shampoo as a simple and cheap cleansing agent for head lice.

When my son started grade one this year he suffered the same fate, so I went through the same procedure with him. He too has a generous amount of styling mousse applied to his hair every morning before school and it would appear that he has been spared any further problems with head lice.

I hope this has helped others who might be finding the fight against head lice a seemingly never ending and expensive exercise.

Heather Golding,
126 Cliff Barrons Rd, UPPER ORMEAU 4208.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

Can anyone help me out? I'm wanting to buy a **CHEESE PRESS, A SMALL MANUAL CREAM SEPARATOR, A BUTTER BOX**, wooden 500 grams. I have a manual butter churn and butter pats and will be getting a cow shortly and want to make my own goods. Having a sea change and need recipes for cheeses etc, old-fashioned yoghurt starters.

Sandra Sheehy,
59 Neilson St, EDGEWORTH 2285.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg,

Like everyone else, I love your magazine and have picked up many tips over the years. It seems that it is now time for me to pass one on. In the article 'All Fired Up' by Mary Peterson, she mentions using a well-worn scouring pad, sugar soap and scrubbing to **CLEAN THE GLASS.** Try wetting a piece of scrunched-up newspaper, dipping it in the cold ash left over from the last fire and wiping the inside of the glass. Really dark blackened areas might need a little more work. Allow to dry (about 10 – 20 seconds) and, using a fresh sheet of dry newspaper, wipe till clean. The first time might take a bit more work, but done on a regular basis it only takes a couple of minutes. Works for me and the only cost is the newspaper that can be used to light the next fire.

Mick Evans,
PO Box 51, WIRRABARA 5481.

Dear GR Readers,

Hi, my name is Aurelie and I'm a 23-year-old girl from France. I was really pleased to find *Grass Roots* in my newsagent. **I'M TRAVELLING IN AUSTRALIA FOR ONE YEAR**, but I would like to stay away from the tourists and big busy cities. For the moment I'm living in Melbourne.

I just want to share the Australian way of life. I want to spend time in the countryside, bush, or a small town would be nice. If you can help me and give me advice to make this journey a great memory (places to visit, events, festivals), I would be very thankful. I'm passionate about anything to do with nature, farms and bushwalking. My parents are farmers, so I would be very interested in visiting any farms. If you can offer me accommodation in exchange for working as a WWOOFer, picking fruit, babysitting or housework, it would be nice! I can be contacted by email.

Aurelie Bourdin, Melbourne 703,
35 Wills St, MELBOURNE 3000.
Email: aurelie.b82@viola.fr

Dear Grass Roots,

I'd like to thank you for all the wonderful hours of reading you've given both my husband and me over many years and for publishing my letter in your August/September edition. I have since contacted Mr Fothergills again and received replacement seeds and a letter. I wasn't impressed with the letter and the way they made it out to be my fault the seeds didn't come up, but while I waited for their reply I planted another brand and every seed came up. For Supa-Pak-Seeds the address is still unknown.

Now I would also like to thank all those lovely unknown friends out there who wrote to me. If I don't get back to you all, thanks for the kind letters. It's a bit hard to get round to replying; at the moment our goats have had kids and between the vegie garden and bottle-feeding orphans we've got our hands full. Thanks again everyone.

Dell Baldwin,
Hannan's Bend, PO Box 56, ST LAWRENCE 4707.

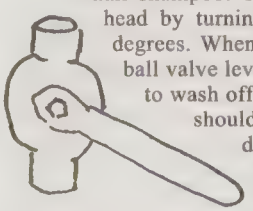
Dear GR,

Old tractors and farm machines are a sentimental reminder of our country's past. There are clubs and magazines devoted to them. GR 167, page 37, has a letter asking for old tractor info. The *Old Machinery Magazine* has lots of readers who could help and a wanted ad could bring results. To contact try: www.tomm.com.au email: info@tomm.com.au

There are always some tractor parts, catalogues and workshop manuals at swap meets where people go to get rid of their junk or buy some more. Many people go just to look and see how the other half amuse themselves. A word of warning though, you could become addicted.

In GR 167, page 41, Marjorie Bligh quite rightly alerts us that society has changed in many ways and you must padlock or lose. Just why some people are so destructive is a mystery and you would think that with all the shrinks, experts of this and that, books on everything and anything, someone would have stumbled on or tripped over the reason. Maybe it's too hard or too controversial, even too politically or socially incorrect or painful to talk about. But something is going on. Everybody agrees on that. Fifty years ago **KIDS WERE ENCOURAGED TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE**, not destructive. So some time in the last 20 or 30 years there has been a change in the public's acceptance of bad behaviour. A don't talk about it and it will go away mindset? Or because we may be sued by someone? As a nation have we lost our identity by copying another nation? Kids grow up to be bigger kids and the cycle continues. Thank you Marjorie for the wake-up call. I hope somebody actually does something constructive about it.

Saving water can be achieved in may ways. An easy item to facilitate showering is a 13-millimetre ball valve costing under $10 at plumbing shops and farm irrigation suppliers. The idea is to **SAVE WATER** while you are soaping, scrubbing or massaging hair shampoo. You can cut off the water at the shower head by turning the lever of the ball valve only 90 degrees. When you need the water again you turn the ball valve lever and get water at the right temperature to wash off the soap or shampoo. Any handyperson should be able to fit one. They are a safety device for children, the aged or infirm so they don't get scalded, and can also be fitted to any water outlet, such as the bath, for the above reasons, or a basin for shaving and cleaning teeth.



ball valve or quick action tap – 90° off to on

Roberino,
PO Box 359, WOOLGOOLGA 2456.

Dear Megg, Mary & GR Family,

The time has finally come for me to settle down and happily work a patch of dirt. At 37 years of age I find myself no longer searching for the answers to all of life's questions. Instead, I am content to embrace the challenges of life as they present themselves and to work with others in making our world a greener and happier place.

All I desire in life is the **OPPORTUNITY TO PROPAGATE INDIGENOUS PLANTS** for the repair of degraded landscapes, the ability to consume and share with others organically grown food, and the facility to meet and live with other like-minded individuals. I have limited finances and do not wish to 'own' or 'dominate' the land or its creatures. Rather, I would like to share the sustainable resources as they present themselves with other like-minded GR people with a view to leaving our bioregion a cleaner, greener and more peaceful environment for the benefit of all future sentient beings. If any of this correlates with your vision of the future, get in touch and we can discuss the finer details. Wishing you all much peace, love and happiness.

Mark Chesterfield,
C/- 88 Baynes St, ROCHESTER 3561.
Ph: 03-5484-3591.
Email: ecodharmamark@hotmail.com

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GRs,

SO WHY DID YOU OWNER BUILD? This would have to be one of the questions we have been most frequently asked. There is no easy answer. We wanted things done with a bit of love, not a lot of money and we could put up with both the pros and cons of being owner builders. To start with I should explain that there are four people in our team, two who did a lot of the work and two angels (Melissa and Kirsten) who inspired us that we could do anything if we wanted to. We didn't go the complete owner builder way; we did the subcontracting of the slab, the carpenter, the plumber and the electrician. So as to meet the regulations in our area we needed certification for all these jobs.

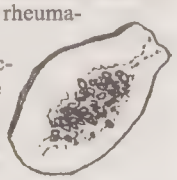
There were a lot of jobs for us as well. They included finding a block and all the trials that go along with it, finding a well-priced and reliable site cutter, finding a good concreter and letting the slab sit, and finding a carpenter, plumber and electrician who would take orders from a woman, as I was the foreman. Then you have the easy things such as finding plans, hanging and stopping plaster, not to mention sanding, bathroom fitouts, cornice, skirting – the list goes on and on.

So why! I hear you scream. Well one good reason is that the lowest quote to build our mudbrick loft house to lock-up, not including fittings or skirting or architraves etc, was $375,000, and that's a lot of zeros if you ask me. Instead, our land and house until occupancy (bathrooms, toilets, kitchen and doors as well) has only come to $160,000. We have over six acres of land, power, tanks (three) and a 20 x 40 foot shed as well. On top of this we can say we did it the way we wanted to, and we still are. So for anybody looking at being an owner builder I would say go for it. My husband and I can handle anything now that we have worked together; we know each other's strengths and make use of them. So keep up the good work GR and remember we can do anything we put our hearts to.

JD,
Victoria.

Dear GR People,

We both enjoy reading about everything in your wonderful mag; it's full of knowledge and friendship. We were introduced to it by a friend and now we don't miss a copy. We would like to know if any readers have a **NATURAL TREATMENT FOR SPURS** under the feet. Anything at all for arthritis pain, osteo and rheumatoid?



Is there anyone **GROWING PAWPAWS** successfully **IN BENDIGO, VICTORIA**? We would like to know how and where to obtain the trees. Some pawpaw leaves for drying and making into tea is another thing we would like to achieve.

Hello to Robert Clarke up in Gympie, Queensland. Best wishes to everyone.

L & G Jackson,
47 Glencoe St, BENDIGO 3550.

Dear Megg, Mary & All,

What an important magazine you are producing. I've **FOUND LOST FRIENDS** and made numerous new ones who give helpful advice, ask me about my garden, what I enjoy, how active am I at 88 and so on and so on. I enjoy cooking, craft, gardening and tours. I don't enjoy housework, being idle, ads on TV or people who don't say thank you. I make myself active even when I'd rather be sitting down with a block of chocolate or a wedge of pavlova. I've just juiced a row of my carrots and made some jellied red beet. The roses are pruned and fed, as are the hippeastrums, orchids, peonies and citrus. My potatoes have been

growing all winter and there's not a blade of grass anywhere, only on the nature strip, and my precious neighbour, Eileen Dixon, mows that.

My garden is so very pretty. The hyacinths and lachenalias have been in bloom since early July. Other plants that are out are violets (doubles and singles), wallflowers, bulbinella, all kinds of daisies, hellebores (I've even got a double pink and white one), camellias and magnolias and many more. I hope this answers some of your questions.

I'd like to **THANK EVERYONE WHO ORDERED MY CRAFT BOOK**, but sadly the Parcel Post satchels are $7.90 to buy, so that brings the price to $23, not $20 that you have been sending. Sorry about that. The book weighs 770 grams. There is a 500-gram satchel, but all of my six books weigh more than 500 grams. *At Home With Marjorie Bligh*, household manual, $15; *Marjorie Bligh's A-Z on Gardening*, $12.50; *Life is for Living*, $15; *Tasmania and Beyond*, $15; *Crafts, Old, New, Recycled*, $15. All are plus the above postage if bought singly, but if ordering three at once, the postage for three is $7.90 – quite a saving.

Marjorie Bligh,
163 Madden St, DEVONPORT 7310.

Dear Megg & Mary,

Just a quick note to say thanks for publishing my article in the August/September edition. I had a beautiful baby girl on 13 July; all went well and my daughter is very healthy. One thing I wanted to add to my article was how fantastic pawpaw ointment is. I use it on my baby's bottom to stop nappy rash and also under her arms and around her neck to stop chaffing and redness. It works amazingly well and is also good for dry skin on adults.

Kate Tuckey,
20 Norwood St, LEURA 2780.

Lovely to hear from you Kate. We wish your new daughter a happy and healthy life; it sounds like she's off to a great start.

Hello Again,

Once again I have an excuse to write to my friends. Thank you again for a very interesting magazine. My daughter in Queensland sent me a small Christmas tree, on it she and her children had put photos of everyone in our extended family. I don't think I've ever heard of something similar; believe me, it's very good and my wife and I treasure it.

Now I would like to know if anyone can help me. I want to **TURN MY SLOW GAS BURNER INTO A FAST ONE**. Does anyone have the knowledge to help me please? Thank you again for a really good magazine. By the way, I have quite a few **GEM SQUASH SEEDS** available for anyone; SAE please.

Lionel Arendt,
PO Box 50, PIANGIL 3597.

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

Re the **URINE CURE** from Julie Emery in GR 171. My mother-in-law considered urine as a cure for many things. Urine was suggested by her and many of the ladies of her time for chilblains. The urine was used warm, straight from the body. Tribal people in many parts of the world still use urine for many things, including washing their hair.

Many thanks Mary for the card tree. Bet all readers will make one for this Christmas season, I know I will. I wish it had been printed when you first got the idea from Sue.

Wonderful contributors to *Grass Roots*. A great Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all staff and readers.

Mary Mathews,
JARRAHDALE 6124.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear GR,

I grew up on a farm and to me it's better to pass on lessons learnt to newcomers.

My father and I have both been caught when **BUYING SECOND-HAND TRACTORS**. We got our tractors from a clearance sale and a wholesaler = lemons. I am looking at a newer tractor sooner or later, as old parts are not available. All tractors are to have a proper rollbar fitted; if not, that's up to the seller.

Over the last 20 years when **STACKING LITTLE SQUARE BALES OF HAY**, we've used salt if there's been a downpour of rain while carting the hay – one and a half cups to every five bales. Depends on size of each layer and how high you are going. Never lost a haystack yet!

Thistle problems? Get one thistle, chop it up, put it into a pot, cover with water and boil it. Remove weed, keep juice. Use one cup to each thistle, but remember you can have three different types of thistles.

FOXES STAY AWAY FROM LAMBS if there's a human smell – old smelly socks or T-shirts with human sweat on them. Smaller paddocks are better so the human smell can work.

Ray.

Dear Grass Roots,

I have sent seeds of **LION TONGUE LETTUCE** to over 500 readers and would like a lot more to send me an SAE as I have lots of fresh seeds and lots more coming on.

Robert Winterburn,
8 Loves Ln, ROSSLEA 4812.

Dear GR Readers,

This proposal has little or no chance of success, so why bother? Well why not? The oldies might find it of mild interest, if not nostalgia. A recent ABC 'Landline' program highlighted the frequent shortage of fruit pickers. This took me back to growing up in wartime UK. Labour shortages were quite common then as most able-bodied men were in the armed forces. We did have land girls who took over many farm jobs, nevertheless school children filled in now and again. We were bused out to farms to help with the harvest. This activity was popular and a break from what we felt were boring lessons. There was no pay, but it didn't seem to matter then. This suggestion won't even be considered, let alone rejected, but two to three weeks out of a school year should not result in a lowering of standards and for pupils it would be a **CHANCE TO EARN A FEW DOLLARS AS PICKERS**.

Times change, of course, but in the 1940s it was felt to be in the national interest, and it was. The experience didn't do us any harm and it taught us about hard work, which it was. Furthermore, I'm positive that no one left school who wasn't literate; there were a few slow readers, but very, very few nonreaders, unlike today in some cases. Also unlike today, there were no fat kids. Food was rationed and in short supply and we walked everywhere. For those lucky enough to live near hedgerows, rose hips fetched a shilling a pound, blackberries were also seasonally available and, on heathland areas, bilberries. Elderberries grew everywhere and were dried as substitute currants and made into an acceptable port-style wine and jellies and jams.

May 1945 marked the end of hostilities in Europe and our school canteen put on a celebration dinner. We all got a large heap of mashed potatoes and carrots, gravy and two sausages each, yes two sausages each! This was followed by steamed pudding and custard – unbelievable – the best meal we'd had in ages. Some children couldn't eat two sausages and so took one home for later. We were lucky really; the Dutch had it much tougher and towards the end were reduced to eating tulip bulbs, quite a number

starving to death. No one would seriously want a return to those times, but they did instill in us an optimism about the future. We'd survived a number of hardships: the Great Depression, a war in which an estimated 50 million died and post-war austerity with all its shortages. Things could only get better, and they have, which is why my generation, those in their 70s, feel so lucky. We managed to live well without mobile phones, computers, TVs, microwave cookers, cars, personal radios, credit cards, DVDs, CDs, VCRs and doubtless other items that seem so essential today. I'm sure some of us oldies still retain one or two of the old values about not wasting things, growing some of our food and making do.

I wrote the above a couple of weeks ago and was astonished to hear on yesterday's news about sending some Aboriginal children to do fruit picking and trying to wean them off petrol sniffing, abuse of alcohol and other drugs. It's a good idea and might even work; it's worth a try. An ex-neighbour of mine, a school teacher, tells me there are some pupils who don't want to be in school, don't want to learn, don't mind being suspended, won't do homework and are disruptive in classrooms. I reckon it would be better to let them leave and find a lifestyle that suits them better.

Here's a tip for readers using **RECYCLED TIMBER**. Get a metal detector. These are not expensive. A saw blade can be severely blunted by running through a nail or screw and more often than not is completely ruined. A metal detector will easily pay for itself. Nail holes are easily plugged with a mixture of sawdust and two-part epoxy adhesive (the Rolls-Royce of glues), which dries rock hard, is waterproof and easily sanded.

Alan Stewart,
12 Weymouth St, ALEXANDRA HILLS 4161.

Dear Grass Roots Team & Readers,

I was sad to read the letter from Jo McRae about the **CHAIN LETTER**. I too have read that letter and it is not as is told. I didn't participate in it because it was too expensive, but it seems to me that it is just a way of people helping people and a more positive thing to do than buying lottery tickets. Those who participate in this kind of income-generating activity can be winners, whereas those who buy lottery tickets are mostly losers. I rather like the idea that I could give a gift to someone and reap a nice reward for doing so, but this particular letter required you to send $10 to one person, but send 200 letters to other people. That put me out of the picture. The presentation of the letter also makes the guy seem to be incredibly greedy and I guess that's the danger of participating in such an activity. It seems as if, after the first success, he just goes on sending out more letters and more and more dreams are realised. It would be interesting to see if there are others who respond to Jo's letter who have participated and been blessed by doing so. I wouldn't call them gullible or suckers.

Thank you for a great magazine. I buy it regularly and it almost always give me ideas to use in my program for teaching self-sufficiency at workshops (and soon a rural training centre) in a developing Pacific nation. When the centre is set up I should write to you and tell you what is happening. I've been thinking that WWOOFers might be interested in giving a hand, but I'd need permission for that.

Jan Edwards,
Email: janet-edwards@bigpond.com

Anonymous letters will not be published. Please indicate if you would like personal details to be withheld.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots Readers,

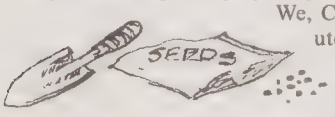
Thank you all for your thoughts, which have helped mould my life since teenagehood (I'm now 40 – EEK!!). I love the atmosphere this magazine projects. It's a good way to touch base and every issue is a healing session.

There is an avenue that budding or **SUBURBAN GRASS ROOTS PEOPLE** might not be seeing. Op shop depots are finding it hard to get male volunteers to help in their recycle sheds. They really need blokes and the blokes need blokes to chit-chat with. My partner is on a disability pension, but for doing eight hours charity work (at his own pace) he qualifies for a mobility allowance with Centrelink. My partner helps unload St Vinnie's recycle bins and cars of donated items. He gets first look at some rare and unique items and then I try to get creative with them: paint here, stitch there. This has all been a big help over our own personal trouble spot and maybe this knowledge will help others.

Claire,
BRISBANE 4000.

Hello to Everyone,

Thank you to all the nice people who swapped seeds with me many months ago. Hope your garden is thriving like mine.



We, Charlie and I, live about 20 minutes from Murwillumbah. We enjoy a very simple lifestyle with limited solar power and mobile phones only. Our intention had long been to distance ourselves from reliance on power and other infrastructure supplied by outsiders. Living in a large bus has freed me of boring repetitive housework, so I can spend lots of time on the vegie garden and enjoying our 16 acres of rainforest, which is part of an MO.

The markets in our area are the best I've seen anywhere. This brings me to another reason for writing. We would like to **OFFER AN OPPORTUNITY** to someone, probably middle-aged like ourselves, maybe single, with a van or tent (whatever), to spend some time here and lend a helping hand. Charlie works four to five days per week, so we can't keep up with everything that needs to be done, such as lantana clearing, grass cutting and so on.

They would need to be active, have a good sense of humour and no pets. Genuine love of bush and wildlife would be essential. Just an hour or two of work per day would be fine. We enjoy sitting round the campfire having a beer and a chat and sharing a meal. If this sounds like you, make contact.

Jeanie,
PO Box 1138, MURWILLUMBAH 2484.
Ph: 0428-597-607.

Dear GRs,

I thought many of you would be interested in an organisation called the Parent's Jury. Here is a copy of a recent news release about this organisation.

'The Parent's Jury is a web-based network of parents who wish to improve the food and physical activity environments for children in Australia.

The Parent's Jury is a forum for parents to voice their views on children's food and physical activity issues and to collectively **ADVOCATE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CHILDREN'S FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENVIRONMENTS.** For example, reduced marketing targeted at young children, more healthy choices for school canteens, and making neighbourhoods safer and more child-friendly.

The Parent's Jury enables parents to nominate and vote for the Parent's Jury Awards for people or organisations that affect, positively or negatively, the availability and promotion of healthy food and physical activity choices for children.

The Parent's Jury is coordinated and administered by Diabetes Australia, Victoria, The Cancer Council Victoria and the Australasian Society for the Study of Obesity, which together have a major interest in improving children's nutrition and levels of physical activity, and reducing overweight and obesity in Australia. The increase of overweight and obesity is one of the biggest health threats facing Australian children.'

To contact the Parent's Jury visit www.parentsjury.org.au Their address is 570 Elizabeth St, Melbourne 3000.

Brian Parry,
SWAN HILL 3585.

Dear GR,

Many thanks for so many hours of reading pleasure. I would love to contribute some things, as well as request information.

A former letter's hint of eucalyptus oil mixed with massage carrier oil (2 – 3 drops to every tablespoon of oil) massaged between toes morning and night **ELIMINATED MY TINEA**. Use every other day or so for continued benefits. Replace your mattress bed sheet with an old **WOOLLEN BLANKET** for many cosy nights in winter.

Mash and drain a can of apples, or stew your own (drained of liquid) in place of oil in muffin recipes – superb, moist, **OIL-FREE** results. For distressing **IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME,** try eliminating oranges and other citrus from the diet. I am one of two people no longer suffering from years of horrific diarrhoea and painful gas since this fortunate discovery.

Labelled fluorescent post-it notes advise me of GR Feedback hints to refer back to in the future.

To get vivid results when dyeing grey hair mix dark red henna powder and beetroot juice to a not-too sloppy paste. Leave to settle for an hour and apply to hair for several hours. It's somewhat tricky to wash out, but lasts well provided hair is not washed in hot water ever after. Do use gloves!

To enliven inner city concrete backyards try a large circle of plants surrounded by chairs. Often free chairs are easy to come by on nature strips. Plants with long flowering periods, interesting, coloured foliage and winter flowering are particularly lovely for this concept. I've purchased one to two a month at around $10 each on a low income, so it has not set me back very much for a fabulous retreat just seconds away. Bliss!

Sufferers of (specifically) **PSORIATIC ARTHRITIS**, and **CLASSIC MIGRAINE** please write in with your experiences and advice, both good and bad. My partner receives minimal relief from these conditions with endless arthritis and migraine medications and advice available – hers are unusual forms.

Also seeking readers who have had success with **NATURAL CURES FOR AGGRESSION AND SPRAYING IN MALE CATS**, despite neutering. Unfortunately, current veterinary medications leave my feline friend rather dopey and devoid of much of his endearing personality (the good bits). Many thanks.

Suzanne,
MELBOURNE 3000.

Dear Grass Roots,

Does anyone have or know where I can purchase the old-fashioned **PERFUMED MIGNONETTE SEEDS** (*Reseda odorata*)?

Mrs J Matthews,
PO Box 40, BROOKTON 6306.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Grass Roots,

Thanks to your October/November issue I can now use up some of my Bowen mangos left over from last Christmas. Our tree is laden once again and after the effort my husband put into painstakingly slicing and freezing the last crop I can now try some new recipes. In a past issue I came across recipes for making wine, however, I have never found a specific recipe for **MANGO LIQUEUR OR WINE** in any of your issues. Could any readers help me?

Heather McCrae,
PO Box 525, PROSERPINE 4800.

Dear Megg & Mary,

Paper housing? Heavens, I thought Roberino had beaten me to the punch in GR 167 by writing about newspaper housing. It so happens that I've thought for a long time that (a) timber is horrendously expensive (unless you live close enough to a dump and can get a lucky find or two, or can mill it off your own property), and (b) **PAPER WAS ONCE TIMBER**, so why not stick sheets of it together and use it to make shelter?

In various homes in the past I have done a lot of wallpapering, so it was a logical extension to think that I could 'wallpaper' with newspaper over a light framework of some kind to build a strong wall of paper. This could be somewhat like papier-mâché in principle. I set about experimenting because I wanted to prove that a cheap and sound structure could be built using discarded newspaper.

First, I needed to see whether it was feasible to glue paper onto a frame and whether there were any pitfalls. I knew that wallpaper glue bought from the hardware or wallpaper shop was very expensive. As kids we made our own glue from flour and water. I had bought 25-kilogram bags of flour for bread making at $19 per bag. This could make a huge amount of glue if necessary.

I stretched some birdwire netting on a timber frame for the trial, and then made a thin boiled flour and water glue in a wide saucepan. My glue was a bit thick at first, but easily diluted. A 1:4 mix of flour to water or even more dilute would do. The mixture is brought to only a low boil by constantly stirring from cold to hot. I had a wallpaper brush, but a wide paintbrush could do.

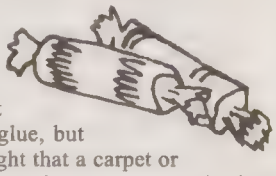
The newspaper I used was our local rag, which I cut into half-sheets measuring about 30 x 40 centimetres. To apply the glue I put the paper on an appropriately sized board, but an old bit of fibro or even a sheet of plastic weighed down to prevent blowing away would do. The glue was put on liberally and the wet paper slapped onto the frame. The next sheet overlapped the first a few centimetres, and so on.

For the experimental expanse of glued paper I stopped at three layers. Already I could see problems. The first was wind! Even with just a slight breeze the paper flapped about while I was applying the glue and putting it up against the frame. Once in place though, the paper stayed there. I painted glue over each sheet once it was on the frame.

The layers of paper sat okay on the wire, but I found that when the paper and glue dried it was easy to prise the paper off the wire.

To avoid unwelcome approaches writers may indicate any personal details they wish to be withheld. Don't forget to put preferred contact details at the *bottom* of your letter. Letters are accepted and edited at the discretion of the publishers.

I thought that maybe for a first layer thinned woodwork glue of a PVA type (polyvinyl acetate) such as Aquadhere should anchor the paper to the wire. I planned to coat the underside of the wire with layers of paper too, and suggest that the first layer could go on with thinned PVA glue, but the stuff can be expensive. I also thought that a carpet or felt needle (semi-circular) could be used to put an anchoring thread to join the paper to the wire. Maybe if I used hessian (another expense) or some other plant cloth as the formwork the paper could adhere better. This is as far as the experiment went. I found the glued three layers of newsprint quite strong, so imagine that 10 or so layers would be very good.

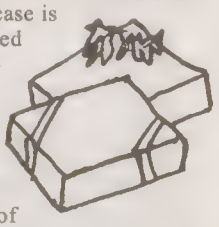


To waterproof the whole thing ordinary house paint in two or three layers should be good, but more would give a better finish. There is also the problem of white ants or moisture wicking up from the ground in a real shelter, so some sort of waterproof footing would be needed to embed the supporting frame on; concrete would be a logical choice, or impervious rocks mortared together.

Common sense would show that fire could be a hazard with a glued-paper structure, so it would have to be sited appropriately and an adequate firebreak such as crazy paving surrounds would be needed. The glue could be impregnated with a fire retardant and something to discourage microbes (such as fungi and bacteria) attacking the paper. Like all new ideas, techniques need to be developed to make this process workable, especially so this layered paper building form can be done by almost everyone.

Recently I purchased a very inspiring book – *Home Work, Handbuilt Shelter* by Lloyd Kahn, 2004, Shelter Publications, PO Box 279, Bolinas, California 94924, USA. Email: homework@shelterpub.com It was reviewed in GR 165 and is available from distributors Bookwise, ph: 08-8268-8222, for $55. One of the articles shows a house built from earth-filled bags rendered with a product made at home called papercrete, a mixture of paper, Portland cement and water all mushed up. More detail can be seen on: www.greenhomebuilding.com I'd think the papercrete could work on a wire or lath framework or could be the daub in a wattle and daub construction. Of course, Portland cement is getting very expensive and is double the price it was when I started building eight years ago. There has been no doubling of my income in that time! Building a low-cost shelter should avoid high-energy extractive products such as cement if possible.

In a way cow dung used as a render is similar to using paper, but has its own in-built glue. Dung in this case is a lot of undigested and partly digested mushed up plant material. The odour disappears quickly. Dung has been successfully used as a render for thousands of years and if used in a modern setting can be sealed with diluted PVA glue or a turps/linseed oil mixture painted on. One big problem these days is collection of manure. It's no problem for us, with cattle breeders for neighbours, but we still have to beat the dung beetles! Dung render should be able to be used over an appropriate framework. Certainly use long rubber gloves, and a nose-peg if squeamish.



I'm tied up with higher priority projects at present, but it would be good if someone had the time and interest to try making a proper structure with layers of paper and report back to GR, detailing problems encountered plus solutions.

Ian Brothers,
'Bridgewater', 213 Barkers Rd, GRENFELL 2810.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Mary,

I am asking for some advice about my apricot tree. I live in coastal Perth, which means I have very sandy soil. I planted a Moorpark apricot eight years ago, with a lot of mulch and manure, and it has grown into a healthy tree about three metres tall. However, it has only a few flowers (often only six or so) and no fruit. I have tried various things on the advice of the nursery that I bought it from, such as using potash around it, acidifying the soil with pine bark and peat. Other years we used chicken manure. Have tried pruning and not pruning, without any improvement. It gets adequate water in winter, not so much, but I think a reasonable amount, in summer. In summer it has thick green foliage and looks very healthy. Perhaps it does not get cold enough here.

I am almost ready to cut it down and try something else, but thought some readers might have some suggestions. I would love to have a good crop of tree-ripened apricots. I have seen them bearing well in other parts of Perth.

My other backyard crops are doing well: macadamias, lemons, limes and passionfruit do very well, and I have one-year-old avocado, mandarin, orange, mango and pecan yet to bear. The almond is prolific, but the parrots clear it out.

The vegies have done well this winter, especially cauliflower, broccoli, snow peas, lettuce and silverbeet. Tomatoes are hard to grow now, don't know why; I used to get good crops, but even the grafted ones seem to get wilt very early, only the cherry tomatoes seem to last. Anyone got any suggestions of varieties to use in Perth?

Anyway between the garden, the chooks, work and the kids I keep busy! Love reading your magazine.

Diane Jeffrey,
MT CLAREMONT 6010.

Dear GR,

I have just bought your magazine for the first time. I enjoyed reading it – so much information in it. Very interesting. I myself have been making laundry bar soap for years; got the recipe from an American book. We had a dairy and every time we killed a beef or had our meat done by the butcher we kept the fat and rendered it on our stove during winter time; it's cheaper that way. I come from the Philippines and back home we always make do with what we have. Making our own soap for the first time in Australia was very exciting for me. I felt I learnt something. The clothes came out very clean, although smelling a bit beefy, but it didn't matter. Now I'd like to learn how to make powder detergent the same as we buy in the shop. I would very much appreciate it if anyone can share a recipe with me.

For the lady looking for a **CHILLI CORDIAL RECIPE,** this one might be what she's looking for, a recipe by Jan Alley called Riverstone Firewater. You need 1 kilogram sugar, 15 bird's eye chillies, 30 grams tartaric acid, 5 cups boiling water, few drops red food colouring, 1 tablespoon lemon essence. Blend ingredients together. Stir until sugar has dissolved. Allow to cool. Stand overnight. Strain and bottle. To serve, add one tablespoon to a tall glass and top with chilled lemonade or mineral water.

Haven't tried this recipe myself yet, maybe in summer.

G M Lee,
MS 537, KINGAROY 4610.

Dear GR Staff & Readers,

I have been reading GR since about issue 15 and although I have lent and lost a few copies I still have quite a good collection for researching when needed. We were lucky enough to acquire some **GUINEA FOWL** eggs in January 2005, so out came the back issues to help with care, sexing and feeding. Only two of the eggs were fertile, but they have grown into lovely birds, though we are confused about their sex; they may be female, we are not sure. Their foster mum hen died recently and they were very upset for a couple of weeks; I think she wore herself out trying to give them the slip. We would find them sitting at her side waiting while she laid an egg, or see them chasing the rooster away when he tried to mate with her. They tend to boss both of our roosters away from the feed and I have even seen them chase my biggest rooster into a walkway with one of them at either end so he couldn't help but have his feathers plucked. Maybe they are male? Could anyone tell me if this is normal guinea fowl behaviour; they are the most amusing pair of birds we've ever had.

I've been trying to find some **ST JOHN'S WORT SEEDS**, but have had no luck, so I wonder if anyone has any that I could buy or even trade for other herb seeds.

Last but not least, I had a selection of native seeds, trees and shrubs given to me by a friend who had a nursery in the Canberra area. Some are not suited to our cool temperate climate so if readers living in warmer areas would like some free seed please contact me with an SAE and I'll send you a packet or two of seed, depending on demand. If you have preferences for either trees or shrubs let me know.

Thank you for a great magazine, shame it isn't a monthly.

Jeanette Emery,
3 King St, CAMPBELL TOWN 7210.
Email: jremery@bigpond.com

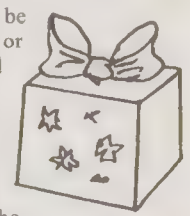
Hi Sue,

I cried when I saw an email from *Grass Roots*. It has certainly brought home to me all the things I love and miss, especially my *Grass Roots*.

I have been here in Cambodia two months now and just love it. I really feel deep down within my heart that this is the place I am meant to be at this time in my life. I love the simplicity of the country and its people, life could not be any better.

I am in **PHNOM PENH** and there are one million people here (far cry from Coen's 300). My work is really full on, but I am enjoying it. Everyone is so kind and loving to me and for the first time I can honestly say it is great to be an older person. I am a bit of a novelty here; there are very few people my age (63) alive in Cambodia as they were all killed during the war. I am enjoying being cared for so much and also being the mother of the six young girls in the office as all their mothers have passed away.

Living in Cambodia is certainly not everyone's cup of tea as it can be and is very scary with lots of shootings, robberies and personal attacks, especially on Western women, but on the other hand that also happens in Australia. You have to be careful at all times and if you do get attacked or robbed you have to be brave to get up and over it or you will never survive here.



I would have to say the traffic is the worst, no one obeys the very few traffic rules and it is every person for themselves to get where they are going in the quickest possible way, which includes riding on the wrong side of the road, riding directly into the traffic and riding up on the pathway. I have a motto (small motorcycle) that takes me to and from work each day and it is a real challenge to get there without being killed, robbed or knocked off your bike. I was very scared to start with, but now I quite enjoy the challenge. Life here is very cheap and fragile.

Sandy Kelly,
PHNOM PENH.

FEEDBACK LINK-UP FEEDBACK

Dear Megg & Readers,

I have many dietary and chemical allergies and am **IN NEED OF A LOT OF HELP** at present. Because of my situation and because I have had many items stolen recently (including my stove) that I am unable to afford to replace, I need some recipes and, for the present, someone to bake them for me. Of course, I will supply all ingredients. Some recipes I need are: double sponge cake with olive oil instead of butter or margarine and artificial cream made from olive oil, rich dark fruit cake, breads, biscuits, lollies, puddings, desserts, hedgehog. I have been a jillaroo since 1975 and love the bush life. Currently I am unemployed and seeking permanent caretaking work, with accommodation and some land for my milking goats, sheep and poultry. I also own and breed working dogs. I have many farm skills and can grow food and look after small children. It must be on an organic farm because of my chemical allergies and I don't mind isolation.

Jillaroo, C/- Dead Bird Mission, ASHFORD 2361.

Dear GR,

Just wanted to show you my Christmas card tree that I made after reading your pattern in the current issue of *Grass Roots* – loved it. Will send you another when I have some cards on it.

Cheers and thanks for this pattern as well as the great coconut macaroons recipe, they were yum!

Sharon, STRATHFIELDSAYE 3551.

Dear GR Readers,

We have half an acre in Hivesville, Queensland, which is out from Kingaroy and Murgon (closer to Murgon). At this stage we are looking at drawing up plans for the house we will eventually build. We need to see the engineer, apply for temporary permanency etc so we can live on our land while building. Accommodation to live in while building is not an issue as we will have the partly converted bus to live in. Money will be saved as we go along to build as we can afford.

We are looking at **BUILDING IN STONE AND SLAB TIMBER**. This will have a wooden floor on footings. Is there anyone who has built in stone only or stone and wood/wood slab, and if so could you please write to us with any helpful information? It looks like there is a lot of granite here. Helpful advice from stonemasons would be appreciated as well. The design that we are looking at has the horizontal slabs slotting into possibly notches or tracks, then the stone holds the slabs in these tracks as the slabs stack on each other to form the wall and so on.

Is there anyone who is building or going to build like us, as you can afford without a need for a loan? Please feel free to write to us, even if you have not built or will not build in stone. Hoping to have a temporary permanency granted by the end of this year so we can start. Also looking at planting the organic way and conserving water as we'll only have the tank and possibly a bore later. Anyone who wants to write, that's fine. Genuine replies. All the very best to you and blessings for the future.

Robert & Madonna Weaver, PO Box 41, HIVESVILLE 4612.

Dear GR,

Many thanks for your wonderful magazine – so much information and such great people. I have retired from the bush, but must admit I really do miss the farm.

Several people are asking for info and I may be able to help. Henrietta asks about **BURNING FEET**. It's an early sign of diabetes; get checked out fast! Don't wait until it affects your sight (like me).

Nicotine and old **CIGARETTE BUTTS ARE DEADLY**; burn them in an incinerator. Old-timers used to use the old black plug tobacco shaved into slivers and soaked in hot water. The resulting liquid was then diluted and used to drench sheep, cattle and horses and many animals succumbed to over-zealous farmers. It was used as a spray for lice on sheep and chooks. As well, it was used on the gardens and food crops, as was arsenic, usually as baits. Arsenic was also used as a dip for sheep.

Thank you for the lovely picture of the peacock on the back cover. There used to be quite a few here on the island, but they have all been exterminated. The island has become a haven for the well-heeled who think the only wildlife should be on TV. The peacocks make too much noise, as do the curlews, and the plovers are a nuisance to the golfers, but yes, they must have their cats and dogs. I think curlews sound better than barking dogs. As for the trees, the quicker they are cut the more room for palms. It was a beautiful island, but is being strangled. Five dead turtles washed ashore in six weeks, probably killed by power boats and jet skis.

Anyone who suffers from arthritic pain – hips, shoulders, knees – try a couple of kiwi fruit a day; it might just work.

Jan Romeo, 23 Marana St, COOCHIEMUDLO ISLAND 4184.

Dear GR,

My husband and I live on a small suburban block with our nine children. We have chickens, fruit trees, grapevines and a vegie patch, but we are definitely amateurs! Could anyone help us with some seeds please? We are looking for **PIGEON PEA** (*Cajanus cajun* or Congo bean), yakon and seeds for the quandong tree. We have a very small amount of loquat tree seeds that we could send in exchange.

Is there anyone in the Perth metro area who could show me how to successfully bottle and preserve? I am definitely a visual learner and have tried preserving before, but failed dismally. Does anyone have any GR issues they no longer want? I had a huge box of them given to me four years ago, but passed them on to a lady moving to a farm down south; now I wish that I had kept them.

We home-school our children and next year will be our 13th year of doing this. Our eldest child has diabetes and our youngest child (the baby) has Down's syndrome. We have three elderly parents who are very needy, so it looks like we will be stuck in suburbia for a long time. If anybody can help us, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you to the GR reader who sent me a lovely envelope full of flower seeds and some vegies. I have lost your name and address so cannot thank you personally.

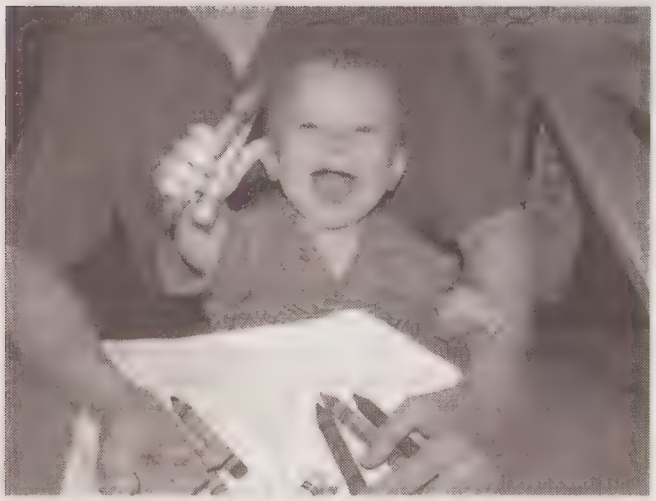
David & Megan Edwards & Family, 12 Wallaby Pl, BROOKDALE 6112.

Please keep letters brief, clearly written and relevant to self-sufficiency topics. Letters pushing barrows (religious, political or other) will not be published.

Send letters to:
Grass Roots Feedback
PO Box 117, Seymour 3661.

Baby's Environment

by Jane 'Many Leaves' Lawrance, Babinda, Qld.



When a baby joins the farm you need to be more aware than ever of safety issues in and around the home. Before you know it that helpless, dependent little bundle will be a curious explorer eager to learn everything about her environment. There are always a few tumbles on the way to independence and parents need to create a safe environment that also encourages exploration, discovery, learning and self-confidence.

HOUSE SAFETY

Andrew has built strong overhead shelves to store our heavy cast iron pots away from little hands. Mugs, glasses, plates and storage jars also have a new shelf in the safe zone. Only plastic bowls, jugs, Tupperware, baking trays, tins and lightweight kitchen utensils can be safely explored with plenty of exciting, clanging noises.

As Emma became more mobile, the hard concrete floors inside and out were a concern. We were given a porta-cot, in which Emma practised falling safely on her bottom and, despite a few tears, got used to getting up again as she developed her confidence. Now she walks supported by her little truck, blowing raspberries, laughing and waving. The 'no!' zones are the rubbish and compost bins and dog bowls.

As I bake every week and a half, we have had to move the Everhot woodstove in order to enclose it safely on the patio. A tall shelving unit on one side, walls on two sides and a low swing gate for access have solved future problems. We will educate her on the safety issues of heat when she can understand.

GARDEN

With so many acres of rainforest, it's not possible to remove all the hazards, like thorny tropical creepers, unknown forest fruits, natural deep ravines, holes and creeks. Constant vigilance and education are necessary until she's older.

Our terraced vegie gardens and orchards are packed with edible plants and fruits. Spiky pineapple leaves, coarse vetiver grass (cut for mulch), and assorted weeds all pose possible dangers. Emma will learn fast by copying what I do, eating the right plants in the garden, with a firm 'no!' to the unsafe things. First-time parenting seems a big hurdle at times with so much to supervise. I've got to let her gain self-confidence to explore and enjoy our land without fear.

I've fixed a wire hook on the pram handlebar to hold a lightweight bucket for small garden tools, Emma's food, and water bottles; underneath go other heavy items and spare cloth nappies for that quick change in the garden. Emma loves her trip around the orchard. As I feed her mulberries, strawberries and cape gooseberries she's learning where fruits come from.

SUN PROTECTION

From white lightweight brush cotton, I've sewn up two useful overalls for myself, with pockets galore for seed and greens collecting. High collars, long sleeves and a quick central zip make them ideal for gardening as they keep out both sun and mozzies. I'll be adapting the pattern for Emma in due course. Learning how to weave my own coconut hat has been invaluable. I'll teach Emma when she's old enough, and by then our dwarf coconuts will be mature enough.

I apply coconut oil as a sunscreen to myself and Emma prior to going outside. Keeping a hat on her is a challenge!

INSECTS

We live in a rainforest not far from the sea, so mosquitoes are a part of our

Emma with dogs Ben and Bob.

Emma loves to explore behind her truck.

life. We stopped using insect repellents 10 years ago when we found a leaking bottle had stripped the paintwork off the shelf. Since then we have strengthened our immunity to mozzies, and Emma copes as well, waving them off; she doesn't cry, or even react badly to the bites.

A few WWOOFers have been petrified by the insects here. Fortunately, I am fascinated by them, spiders in particular. I've got a good library of insect books to help me teach Emma as she grows up to understand their vital role in our world. Many phobias start when a person is very young and I want Emma to know that there's no need to kill, spray or be frightened about insects or spiders.

DIRT

We can't worry about dirt where we live. Mud, puddles, dust, stones, chook and dog poo, compost – it's all here, and besides, it's part and parcel of a grassroots lifestyle. The old folks I meet in town say dirt never hurt them! In the garden crispy leaves and crumbly red soils are all popped into her mouth, in fact, anything that fits! She ingests small amounts of 'safe' dirt, satisfying her need to find out, as well as strengthening her immune system.

Inside, Emma explores around the house, even where the broom can't reach. I maintain bathroom and toilet hygiene with bicarbonate of soda and white vinegar, regularly clean bench tops and sweep the floors.

Books recommend sterilising utensils (I breast-feed anyway). I think everyday cleaning of water bottles and utensils and drying them in the sun and wind is satisfactory. I believe it's important for Emma to be exposed to small 'bugs' here and there to keep her immune system busy, and she'll be stronger for it. Any cuts and scratches are dabbed with colloidal silver.

DOGS

Our family structure has changed since Emma's arrival. Andrew and I are the alpha pair of the pack, now followed by Emma, with our dogs dropping a peg in rank. Bob, a 12-year-old red cattle dog, is the dominant dog over two-year-old Ben, a sleek Rhodesian Ridgeback.

After Emma's birth, Andrew took home the smelly delivery clothes and left them where the dogs could sniff them. During visiting hours, he brought Bob one day to meet Emma outside the hospital in neutral territory, and Ben the next. Both sniffed, licked and accepted the new arrival before we were on home ground. Once home, we involved both dogs in the same room as Emma, to avoid jealousy, and gave positive reinforcement with praise and titbits to eat. Of course, a vigilant eye was, and still is, necessary.

I pop plain popcorn for us to eat, and as easy training nibbles for the dogs. With supervision, Emma feeds them crunchy popcorn from her hand, and the dogs gain confidence and acceptance of her, and vice versa. Emma should grow up with confidence around animals.

I have a book called *Think Dog! An Owner's Guide to Canine Psychology* by John Fisher (now out of print). When a dog gains a higher rank than he should within the family pack, problems occur. We communicate by using simple nonviolent, dominant body language, like going into the house first, closing the door, then allowing the dog in last. Basic commands like sit, stay, down and roll over, all practised daily before feeding time, are both essential and rewarding for them. Ben knows his place, the bottom of the pack. He's happy with it too, otherwise 42 kilograms of untrained dog would be dangerous!

Try staring eye to eye with your dog, he'll realise you are higher in the pack hierarchy than him. Fisher has learnt that crossing your legs in front of a dog creates dominance over him. We all eat first; the dogs wait, and are fed in order, Bob, then Ben.

CHOOKS

Emma enjoys coming over to the chook houses to watch me collect eggs and carry out necessary chook care tasks. Her look of excitement as the birds rush out for a day's foraging is delightful. As she grows up she'll learn where eggs come from and help me out when we hatch more chicks, thereby understanding the process of life and death.

Child-Safe Your Home

The five most common danger areas for children in the home are:

- Unsafe low-level glass, particularly in furniture items.
- Sharp edges and corners at a child's eye level, particularly on fireplaces, kitchens, benches and furniture.
- Dangerous door situations which could lead to finger injury or amputation.
- Unsafe storage of medication and chemicals.
- Unsecure steps and stairs.

Making these more safe, for example by fitting safety films to glass windows and furniture and child barriers to stairs and kitchens, could prevent some of the 140,000 serious accidents that happen to children in the home each year.

KIDS PAGE

SIZZLING SUMMER

School holidays mean sun, lazy days, ice cream, trips to the beach, family and friends. Summer can be full of fun things to share with others or to amuse yourself. Read this page and you'll never hear yourself say, 'Mum, I'm bored'.

SUPREME SAND CASTLES

It's such fun building sand castles. The classic method involves packing and patting moist sand into a mould that roughly resembles the shape you want. But if you want a slightly more snazzy castle you might consider the following:

Take some 'tools' to the beach – a pastry knife is a great aid for carving features such as windows and doors; a pastry brush or any cheap, soft-bristled brush cleans up your carvings by brushing away loose sand.

To build tall towers prepare a base by packing loose sand and pounding it flat. Then make a hole near the water's edge and mix sand and water together and use this to make loose 'patties' to pile on top of each other to make a tower.

FRUITY ICY-POLES

You will need:

- ★ assortment of summer fruits – plums, apricots, cherries
- ★ water
- ★ sugar to taste, optional

Cut fruit into chunks – with adult supervision – and discard pips. Place into a saucepan with water and sugar if desired. Bring to boil and let simmer until fruit is stewed (soft). Cool. Pour into icy-pole moulds or ice cube trays and freeze until set.

MANGO ICE CREAM

You will need:

- ★ 2 tsp cornflour
- ★ 2 tbsp sugar
- ★ 1 cup cream
- ★ 1 cup milk
- ★ 170 g mango pulp

Mix cornflour, sugar and cream in a saucepan. Add milk and cook while stirring until mixture boils and thickens. Remove from heat. Leave to cool slightly. Stir in mango pulp. Pour mixture into a big plastic bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Put in freezer for 2 hours until the ice cream hardens a little. Take out and beat on medium speed for about 4 minutes. Put in freezer again for 4 hours or until firm.

IDEAS FOR A SUNNY DAY

Pick one of these before saying 'Mum, I'm bored'. Remember to always wear sunscreen and a hat for outdoor activities.

- ★ Do handstands in the local pool.
- ★ Fly a kite.
- ★ Prepare and enjoy a picnic.
- ★ Pick some flowers from your garden or that of a friend and arrange them in a vase.
- ★ Teach yourself to juggle.
- ★ Write, act in and organise a play or concert for family and friends.
- ★ Go for a walk in your area or the area you are holidaying in:
  - take a camera
  - take a sketch book
  - make it on alphabet walk where you have to find at least one item in nature for each letter of the alphabet.
- ★ Read a book in a hammock or a tree or lying on the grass or outside on your own personal reading/relaxing cushion.

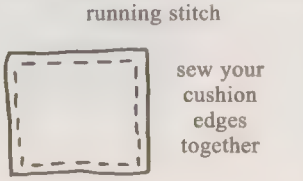
MAKE YOUR OWN CUSHION

Make reading outside extra enjoyable!

You will need:

- ★ fabric – any at all, about ½ metre x ½ metre
- ★ large needle
- ★ yarn or strong cotton
- ★ plastic bags

Cut 2 squares of fabric. Cut a piece of yarn about 1 metre long, thread it through the needle and tie a knot at the end (you may need an adult's help). Start at any corner and sew the edges together using a simple running stitch as shown. When you have sewn 3 sides, stuff your cushion full of old plastic bags. Sew the last side closed.



IN THE KITCHEN

It's summer and it's berry season – two very good reasons to squander your home-grown crop on these tipsy treats and sweet snacks. A little naughty and berry delicious!

TIPSY SUMMER BERRIES

2 oranges
1 cup water
4 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp Cointreau (or orange juice)
400 g strawberries
400 g blueberries

Using a vegetable peeler, cut thin strips of peel from the oranges and cut into fine long strips. Place water and sugar in a small saucepan, stir over heat, without boiling, until sugar is dissolved. Add orange peel, bring to the boil and simmer 2 minutes. Cool. Stir in Cointreau or orange juice and refrigerate. Combine berries and syrup and serve with thick cream or ice cream. Serves 4.

RASPBERRY HAZELNUT CAKE

250 g butter, softened
2 cups caster sugar
6 eggs
1 cup plain flour
½ cup SR flour
1 cup hazelnut meal
160 g sour cream
300 g fresh raspberries

Preheat oven to moderate. Grease a deep 22 cm round cake pan and line base and side with baking paper.

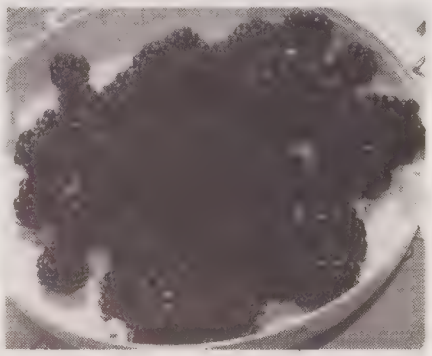
Beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy, then add eggs, one at a time, beating until just combined between additions. Mixture will curdle at this stage, but will come together later.

Transfer mixture to a large bowl and, using a wooden spoon, stir in flours, hazelnut meal, sour cream and raspberries. Spread mixture into prepared pan.

Bake cake in moderate oven about 1½ hours. Stand cake for 10 minutes, then turn onto a wire rack. Turn top-side up to cool. Serve with cream and fresh berries.

BERRY AND LIME COMPOTE

500 g strawberries
125 g caster sugar
finely grated rind of 1 lime



1 tbsp lime juice
120 g raspberries
150 g blueberries

Hull strawberries and cut width-ways into 3 mm slices. Combine sugar, lime rind and juice with 2 tablespoons of water in a heavy-based saucepan and stir over a low to medium heat until sugar dissolves. Add berries and stir to coat in syrup. Bring to a simmer and cook over low to medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until soft (raspberries will collapse). Cool to room temperature. Compote will keep in the fridge for up to 2 days. Serves 8.

GLUTEN-FREE CHOCOLATE ROLL WITH BERRIES

6 eggs, separated
1 cup caster sugar
200 g dark chocolate, melted
1 tbsp caster sugar, extra
300 ml thickened cream
2 tbsp Bailey's Irish Cream
cocoa powder for dusting
400 g mixed berries to serve

Preheat the oven to 160° C. Grease a 25 cm by 30 cm Swiss roll pan, and line the base and two opposite sides with a piece of baking paper.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar in a small bowl for about 8 minutes or until thick and creamy. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl then fold in the chocolate.

Beat the egg whites in a clean bowl until soft peaks form. Gently fold the egg whites into the chocolate mixture in 2 batches, using a balloon whisk. Spread the mixture into the prepared pan. Bake in a moderately slow oven for about 20 to 25 minutes or until firm to touch.

Meanwhile, place a large sheet of baking paper on a board; sprinkle with the extra sugar. Turn the cake onto the sugared baking paper, carefully remove the lining paper and cover the cake loosely with a tea towel. Cool the cake to room temperature. Trim the crusty edges of the cake carefully.

Beat the cream and liqueur in a small bowl until firm peaks form. Spread the cake evenly with the cream. Roll the cake up firmly from the short side, using the paper to lift and guide the roll. Wrap the roll firmly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Dust the roll with sifted cocoa and serve with berries. Serves 8.

WARM BERRIES AND YOGURT

400 g mixed berries
2 tbsp liqueur of your choice
1½ cups thick natural yogurt
2 tbsp brown sugar

Combine berries and liqueur in large bowl, then divide berries into four individual shallow serving dishes.

Top with yogurt and brown sugar and set aside until ready to eat. Just before serving preheat grill to very hot. Place dishes on baking tray and grill 2 minutes until bubbling. Serves 4.

FRESH BERRY FRAPPÉ

300 g blueberries
250 g raspberries (or try strawberries, blackberries or boysenberries)
40 ice cubes, crushed
½ cup fresh orange juice
slug of vodka if you choose

Blend or process berries until just smooth. Push berry purée through fine sieve into large bowl; discard solids in sieve. Stir in ice, juice and vodka and spoon into serving glasses.

Try Terrific Tamarind

by Neville Jackson, Valhalla.

The tamarind, *Tamarindus indica*, originated in eastern Africa and is widely naturalised in Southeast Asia. It has been cultivated in India for many centuries and is now frequently grown in tropical areas. During the Middle Ages Arabs distributed this popular fruit throughout their sphere of influence. The Crusaders introduced the tamarind as a spice and cooling drink to Europe in the 12th century. In the 17th century Spaniards introduced tamarind to the West Indies and Florida as a commercial crop. It is now widely grown in the dry tropics.

Evergreen, drought-tolerant once established, leguminous trees with shaggy brown bark and pale green oval leaves, tamarinds grow to over 20 metres high. Trees can be readily grown from cuttings or seeds planted in spring or summer when the ground temperature is about 35° C. Seeds germinate readily in the warmer and drier parts of Australia.

Tamarind wood is said to be termite-proof. The yellow flowers with red veins are in small racemes (clusters) that become brown bean-like pods up to 10 centimetres long. When these pods darken and become dry and cracked they are ripe. The pod contents, large seeds surrounded by reddish-brown edible pulp, are known as 'dates' and are somewhat similar in appearance.

Tamarinds are a nutritious, easily stored spice and food for humans and many animal species. The dates are the main food of the ringtail lemurs of western Madagascar, maintaining these primates throughout the year, especially in the breeding season. The tamarind trees are the main reason for intergroup rivalry.

In India tamarind is mainly added to curries; sambhars, a spicy lentil and vegetable stew; rasams, a highly seasoned lentil soup; and also chutneys. Tamarind acts as a souring agent and takes the place of lime and lemon in most Asian countries.

Thailand's favourite use is in hot and sour soups, while in the West Indies diners prefer sweetly acidic rice dishes and stews flavoured with this aromatic spice. Tamarind is also extensively used as a preservative for dried fish.

Enjoy tamarind in cooling drinks or as a souring taste in food.

Desserts served with rice and a cooling tamarind drink are also popular. To prepare this beverage soak several complete dates overnight in water. Strain before drinking. This provides a herbal drink rich in potassium and fruit sugars with a mild laxative effect. A special feature of tamarind drink is its unusual 'refrigerant' quality: a 'cold' taste that refreshes and is especially appreciated in hot climates.

With Southeast Asian cooking now so widespread, tamarind use as a flavouring and spice has greatly increased. In Western countries tamarind is a traditional and essential ingredient in Worcester sauce. More recent interest in Indian and Asian cooking has enlivened many dishes with the unique nutrition and flavour of tamarind.

Jams and jellies made with tamarind benefit from the seed's high pectin content as a setting agent as well as the distinctive flavour of the flesh. To use, seeds with adhering flesh are put in a net bag and boiled with the fruit. Remove bag before bottling.

HOW TO BUY TAMARIND

Tamarind products are sold mainly in Asian or Indian stores in various forms.

Blocks

Fibrous pulp is partially dried and pressed into slabs. This concentrate smells like molasses and has an acidic, fruity taste.

Dried Slices Of Pulp

These are flattened dates with seeds removed. Soak in water for incorporation into dishes.

Sugar-Coated Balls

These are mild in flavour with a subtle aroma. Presoak before use.

Concentrate

This thick, dark brown paste with a sharp acidic taste is used in stews, curries and sauces.

Pods

Remove the thin, brittle shell. The fleshy pulp contains up to 10 seeds, which may germinate if planted in summer. Tamarind seeds contain vegetable oil. They can be ground into an edible paste that keeps well as it is a natural preservative.

RECIPES

Cinnamon And Nutmeg Drink

There are various recipes for tamarind drinks; all are considered to be appetisers and digestives and can be added to curries, pickles and chutneys. The basic drink is made by simply steeping the pulp, or pulp and seeds, in water. This one has a more complex, spicy flavour.

- 3 tbsp tamarind pulp
- 2 cups water
- 3 tsp grated ginger
- ½ tsp powdered nutmeg
- ½ tsp powdered cinnamon
- 2 – 3 tsp sugar
- salt, to taste, if desired
- iced water
- mint sprigs
- lemon slices

Dissolve tamarind pulp in 2 cups of water. Add ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, sugar, and salt if required. Add iced water to dilute to desired strength and garnish with mint sprigs and lemon slices.

Tamarind Chicken Marinade

- 1 tbsp tamarind paste
- 4 tbsp hot water
- 4 tbsp tomato sauce
- ¼ tsp chilli powder
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp ginger powder
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp desiccated coconut
- ½ tsp cumin or coriander
- 1 kg chicken pieces
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 sml onion, chopped

Soak tamarind paste in hot water for 15 minutes. Add tomato sauce and all other seasonings and spices, except curry powder. Mix well and coat chicken pieces in this marinade. Leave several hours or overnight in refrigerator. When ready to prepare meal, sauté chopped onion and curry powder in hot oil and stir-fry till onion is soft and translucent. Add chicken and all marinade and stir-fry till chicken is brown on all sides. Lower heat, cover and cook till chicken is cooked through, about 15 minutes. Serve with rice and thin slices of coloured capsicum and parsley as a garnish.

Tamarind And Chilli Dipping Sauce

- 1 tbsp oil
- 4 shallots, finely chopped
- 1 sml chilli, finely chopped
- ¼ cup tamarind purée
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- lemon or lime juice, to taste

Heat oil, add shallots and stir-fry for 2 minutes over a low heat. Add chilli and cook for 1 minute more. Add tamarind purée and sugar then bring to boil and simmer 5 minutes. Allow to cool, season with lime or lemon to taste before serving.

Indian Chutney

- 3 tbsp tamarind paste
- 1 cup hot water
- 2 tsp brown sugar
- 1 tsp ground fennel
- 2 tsp grated fresh ginger
- pinch chilli powder
- salt and lemon juice, optional

Soak tamarind paste in hot water until cool, stir to dissolve. Add herbs and spices, stir and taste. Add salt if required. Lemon juice sharpens the flavour.

OTHER USES

Over the centuries the health benefits of tamarind have been widely utilised. In India the paste has long been used for bowel disorders and dysentery. Herbalists there still recommend vitamin-rich tamarind products for liver and kidney treatments and for the relief of fevers. Traditional Indian herbals incorporate leaves in an intestinal worming agent.

Tamarind leaves have several uses: as a warm external poultice bandaged onto boils or sores, to produce red and yellow fabric dyes and as a useful garden mulch. However, never plant a tamarind tree where its leaves may shed rainwater onto a roof, vehicles or machinery. Leaf runoff is highly acidic, rusts metals and will affect paintwork.

For astrological-minded folk, the planet Saturn rules tamarind because of the pulp's cooling properties.

To grow a tamarind tree seed can be obtained from pods, or sometimes found in block paste. Fresh seed may be purchased from Phoenix Seeds, PO Box 207, Snug 7054, Tasmania. Email: phnxseed@ozemail.com.au

Herbal Gifts For Christmas

by Michelle Jones, Upwey, Vic.

Have you ever noticed what a material world we live in? When I look around my lounge room I see the gifts of Christmas past cluttering my house. I don't have enough space for this to continue, so I decided to do something about it. I can't change what people give to me, but I can what I give to people. I wanted to start a trend and promote the exchange of herbal gifts by giving them to others. Remember to match the gift to the person so the gift is a welcome one.

The two reasons most people don't make something are they are short of either time or money. If it's time, they usually have a surplus of money; if they are lacking money, they usually have plenty of time. If you are time poor, then you need to plan that time. Instead of making things from scratch, buy them. Purchase the plants rather than growing them from seed or cuttings, or buy products containing herbs. If you are the sort of person who doesn't have enough money, use time to your advantage. You can collect and dry herbs, take cuttings and grow plants from seed, make bags out of scraps of material and so on.

HERBACEOUS IDEAS

Here are some gift suggestions to get you going.

- Herbal bath bags, moth bags, tussie mussies, dried culinary herbs.
- Fresh herbs either as single plants or combined into a theme, Shakespeare's herbs, for example.
- A wreath of fresh herbs. The ones that dry well are good for this purpose, such as rosemary and bay.

Other ideas can be found in how you use herbs. Most herbs and herbal products that you currently use can be made into a gift or gift basket.

- A basket of ingredients used in a favourite dish, perhaps grandma's chutney.
- A jar of dried herbs to be used as a tea.
- A living basket of culinary herbs and some secret recipes.

RESOURCES

The best place to start is with what you have on hand. What herbs do you grow? What skills do you have? Is there something in surplus that you might like to reuse? Do you have time or money as a resource? There are lots of items that are good buys from the op shop; sometimes you can find cane baskets or other containers that make excellent gift baskets. Do you have a surplus of lemons, eggs or fruit from your tree? Think about what you have and how these might be combined into a gift.

I make a salad dressing from lemon juice, garlic and olive oil. The gift could be a basket of the ingredients with a recipe included.

Next, think about what you can make as a gift and match it to the recipient. This is the most vital part of the process. Happy gift giving.

First published in the December 2004 edition of *The Herb Age*, the newsletter of the Herb Society of Victoria, PO Box 396, Camberwell 3124.

HERBS WITH MAGIC QUALITIES

For Love and Romance: Gardenia, marshmellow, mimosa, rose, sorrel, tansy, vanilla.
Money: Basil, dill, cinnamon, ginger, honeysuckle, spearmint.
Good Luck: Clover, comfrey, fern, heather, horsetail, nutmeg, vetiver.
Communication and Travel: Caraway, dill fennel, lavender, lemon verbena, marjoram, parsley, savoury.
Good Health: Angelica, salad burnet, coriander, eucalyptus, hyssop, juniper, mugwort, pine, poppy seed.
Success: Bay, bergamot, chamomile, lovage, marigold, rosemary, rue, saffron, sweet pea.
Wisdom and Learning: Agrimony, borage, chervil, cumin, hyssop, endive, thyme, sage, chervil.

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Safe Fruit Fly Control

by Dorothy Creevey, Old Bonalbo, NSW.

Put the chemicals away, let the chooks loose, and try some simple but effective strategies to eliminate pesky fruit fly.

For the fruit grower there is nothing more disheartening than cutting open a piece of fruit that you have lovingly nurtured for months, only to discover that its protein content is much higher than you desire. Using the fruit fly as an example of integrated pest management, there are several approaches. Don't forget that the tiny flies that hover around your fruit bowl are generally fungal gnats, not fruit flies.

ORCHARD PLANNING

You could start by reconsidering your need for fruit-fly-prone plants; perhaps by growing less susceptible plants instead. If you do choose to plant susceptible species, or already have them growing, avoid early varieties or re-bud or graft existing rootstock to a more suitable variety. Try to plan your orchard so you have at least three weeks between ripening times of different fruits.

Consider the other fruits that might be growing nearby. Some, such as apples, citrus, loquats and pomegranates, while less liable to be stung, have long maturing times and may carry fruit fly over to the next crop.

WHAT IS IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) is, as the term suggests, the integration of various pest control methods to achieve a positive outcome. In mainstream agriculture that might include the use of chemicals. However, organic growers and home gardeners can implement a range of safer methods to gain tolerable control of most pests.

PREVENTION

If fruit flies haven't found your crop yet, then be vigilant about checking fruit being brought in from elsewhere.

To help prevent them flying in, plant windbreaks around the orchard that will capture many windborne pests. Ridges of soil are also a great physical barrier.

Hiding susceptible crops from the enemy by interspersing them with non-susceptible trees is worth trying.

To prevent access to the ripening fruit use physical barriers. In the ripening season you can either completely cover the tree or cover bunches or individual fruit with a cover made of fly-proof material or paper bags. These can be purchased, or you can try making them out of recycled, very fine mesh curtains.

DISCOURAGEMENT

Make your place unattractive to fruit flies by planting repellent herbs such as pyrethrum, southernwood, tansy, sunflowers and giant Russian garlic amongst susceptible trees.

Repellents can also be hung in the trees. These could be small ventilated containers such as plastic bottles with many holes drilled in them containing things like urine, cloudy ammonia, naphthalene, kero or diesel. Or blend garlic with water and soak strips of rag in the solution. Hang these repellents 10 metres apart in the orchard and four metres apart in the vegetable garden. Perhaps you could try painting tomato stakes with them!

Increase predator habitat areas, or at least stop spraying them with insecticides. Some predators would be birds, poultry, predatory flies, ants, ground beetles and spiders.

BAITED LURES

About six to eight weeks prior to fruit ripening, hang a few pilot lures in susceptible trees; these will inform you of fly activity. Fruit flies are attracted to moisture, sweetness, yeast, pheromones and the colour yellow and these form the basis of many baits.

Making Lures

The container can be any recycled plastic bottle. I prefer small plastic juice bottles. In the top half of the bottle drill a hole large enough to allow fruit fly entry, but small enough to prevent access to bees and other useful insects. Fruit flies are attracted to

Poultry such as chooks and geese eat the pupae and disrupt the breeding cycle.

yellow, so put a strip of yellow tape or paint just below holes or try yellow food colouring in the mix.

In the container put the moisture, sweetness and yeast.

The moisture component is water. For sweetness try sugar, honey, molasses, syrup, jam or vanilla. Molasses is slightly less attractive to bees than is honey. Yeast attracts female flies. You can use bread yeast, beer, wine, Vegemite, Marmite, milk or fruit. Pheromones, incorporated in commercially available Dak pots, only attract male flies.

Any mixture of the above ingredients won't kill the flies, but most of those attracted to it will drown, especially if a little soap is added to the water to break surface tension. To ensure all flies attracted to the bait are killed you can add nicotine, neem or pyrethrum to the mixture.

Space several baited lures around the orchard and vegetable garden and empty and refill containers weekly during the danger period.

DISRUPT THE BREEDING CYCLE

Look for the weak links in the fruit flies' breeding cycle. One could be that the pupae need to over-winter in the soil. Eggs are laid under the skin of ripening or ripe fruit. With stone fruit the whole fruit goes rotten. With citrus only the attacked segment becomes unusable in the early stages. It is difficult to determine whether the fruit has been attacked as the maggots may have already departed.

At full size the maggot chews and worms its way to the outside of the fruit, coils itself into a spring and launches itself into the air. It falls to the ground and burrows into the soil where it pupates in five days, depending on the weather. Mature flies hatch and will feed for a week before mating.

To break this cycle, let some chooks scratch about under the trees and eat the pupae during winter, or plant susceptible trees in the chook run.

DISRUPT FEEDING

Fruit flies need protein to produce eggs and this can be sourced from honeydew secretions and sooty mould, caused by aphids, so control aphids. Aphid attack is often due to a nitrogen deficiency, so try feeding the affected plant nitrogen. A spray of 250 grams soft soap mixed with 25 litres water will help get rid of aphids. A garlic spray will repel them. Painting trunks biannually with a lime whitewash could also help.

It is during the flies' feeding week that baiting can be most effective. Baits are partially successful, but never completely so, and must be used in conjunction with other methods.

Space several baited lures around the orchard and vegie garden. Place three per tree in trees that are not currently bearing fruit. Check lures frequently to ensure you are not trapping too many beneficial predators and pollinators.

A SAFE SPRAY

A very fine mist spray of one part neem to 40 parts water can be tried. Apply after sundown and spray under lower canopy to wet undersides of leaves and budding fruit. It would need to be applied often and after rain.

DISPOSE OF STUNG FRUIT

Inspect fruit regularly, daily or at least every three days. Don't let fruit overripen on trees. Pick and destroy any fruit with brown marks or small holes. Dropped fruit must be picked up and destroyed.

Cook and feed infected fruit to poultry or solar cook it in a sealed, black plastic bag in the sun for a season before turning it into liquid manure. Alternatively, immerse fruit in water that has a little kero in it.

More Information

In order to protect valuable commercial crops, the law says that you must control fruit fly. Find out your state's requirements.

You'll find another article about fruit fly control in GR 112, and one with some traps to make in GR 156. Information about neem was in GR 98 and 109. See page 82 for how to order back copies.

FLORA FOR FAUNA

To attract birds, butterflies and native bees, plant bottlebrush, grevillea, banksia, correa and other nectar producing plants.

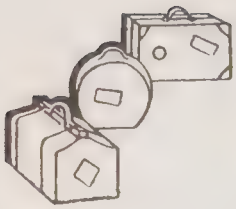
Install a birdbath close to shrubs or trees to provide cover for birds as they come and go. Make sure it's regularly filled.

Make hiding spots for lizards from half buried stones, logs and mulch. Flat exposed rocks, protected from wind, make perfect lizard sunning spots.

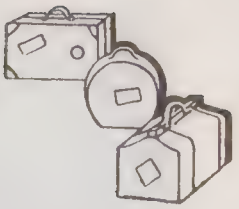
Create a frog friendly pond with damp mossy crevices and the right native plants to attract tasty insects.

Dense prickly shrubs will provide shelter and nesting sites for small native birds.

Put a seat in a shady spot so you can relax and enjoy the beauty you've created.



TRAVELLING TIPS



by Mark Chesterfield, Rochester, Vic.

There are frequently Feedback letters asking for advice about travelling around Australia. I hope I can help would-be gypsies by sharing some thoughts based on my own travels.

THE VEHICLE

You need to weigh up the pros and cons of both diesel and petrol fuels. Diesel is slightly more expensive, as are the servicing costs. This is offset by increased reliability, greater fuel economy and deep-water crossing capabilities (dependent upon actual vehicle design). Petrol is slightly less environmentally friendly, offset by being generally cheaper to purchase initially. LPG is an option, but its limited availability, especially in remote regions, makes it a questionable choice for travellers.

My personal choice would be an XD, XE or XF Falcon station wagon or panel van. Why? There's heaps of carrying capacity by means of a roof rack or trailer, with dry storage inside the vehicle. The long wheelbase ensures a comfortable ride. They are powerful, for passing road trains, and easily repaired. Of course, this type of vehicle is rear-wheel-drive only, but with some relatively cheap and simple modifications (increased ride height, springs and shocks, sump and fuel tank 'bash' guards and eight-ply light truck tyres) you'll access 90 percent of areas traversed by all-wheel-drive vehicles.

LINKING UP

The best way of linking up with other like-minded GR-types of people, both local and international, is to try WWOOFing. At last count there were close to 2000 willing hosts, many with children, just waiting for you to give them a try. Plenty of people travel with kids and plenty of people WWOOF with kids too. Two adults and one child equals approximately 8 to 10 hours 'work' each day. That means mum and dad work approximately four to five hours each. In return they receive lovely yummy breakfast, lunch and dinner for all, comfy beds and heaps of cultural benefits to boot.

WWOOF hosts can provide you with heaps of places to see that are not in the travel books, and as for places to avoid, they can help you with this information too. There is nothing better than having your own personal tour guide, no matter where you decide to stay. Of course, it is not all fun and no work; most WWOOF hosts genuinely need a hand. However, 'work' can usually be found to suit the skills and abilities of most individuals.

TRAVEL PRECAUTIONS

Travelling soon? Do take some simple precautions against deep vein thrombosis. Whether on a train, plane or bus, take off your shoes to allow freer blood circulation and do exercises every half an hour. Take an empty four or five litre wine cask bladder and blow into the top with the tap open. When half inflated, place the bladder on the floor and walk, pressing alternately on the bladder with each foot.

Roberino

TO TENT OR NOT TO TENT?

Finally, to tent or not to tent? Swags can settle this conundrum once and for all; they are quick and easy and have no wobbly poles! In the (rare) event that your WWOOF host cannot find a roof to put you under on a rainy night, or you're on the road to somewhere and you experience a downpour, there's always the back of the good old Falcon wagon.

Best of luck to all the gypsies and WWOOFers on the road at the moment. My heart goes out to you all.

Want to know some more about WWOOFing? Go to www.wwoof.com.au or ph: 03-5155-0218.

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Fishing For Fertiliser

by Peter Berry, Orient Point, NSW.

What tipped me off to the action was the sound of Bob's tin cup hitting the rocks followed by his shout, 'Wo!'.

I rolled over in my sleeping bag and peeked out of my tent to the sounds of Bob muttering about 'steam trains' and 'speed boats'. His hands were shaking as he tied another hook to his line and put some more corn on it.

'Bit of action mate?' I yelled.

'Bloody steam train if you ask me, get your gear quick.'

My son Scott and I were camping by the Kangaroo River with our friends Bob and his son Tim. We had come to catch some carp, just for the fun of it and to take some home to fertilise the garden. Bob's citrus trees were going wild with all the carp he had stuffed in around the roots and my vegies love them.

The morning was cold and damp with a heavy fog. I could only just make Bob out in the shadows of the bank by his rod poking out. The light from the upcoming sun was reflecting off the river, showing the fog to be lifting like steam. But the surface of the water was still and calm like a mirror.

Bob was waving wildly and calling me over. He said that something had busted him off and nearly pulled the rod out of his hands. I put some corn kernels on my hook and tossed it out. Bob was standing up now and no longer relaxed. Suddenly, my line raced out across the water and, 'twang!', it snapped.

'Crikey. It was like a steam train', I said to Bob.

'What'd I tell ya?' he replied, laughing and excited. He'd had a go at them before.

'Knot must have come undone', said Scott, examining my line. And sure enough, there were telltale twists at the end of it.

'Okay, okay. I'm gunna get another hook on good and proper this time.' Now I was talking to myself and my hands were shaking, must have been the adrenaline.

'Got one', yelled Bob, as he struggled

to keep his footing. Then 'snap' and he'd busted off again. 'Must be bloody crocodiles', he yelled. His heart was racing. Now we wished we had the beach rods instead of our light gear.

Scott decided to have a go and I said, 'Watch out, or they'll pull you in'. Then it went quiet; we must have scared them away. The sun came up over the mountains and the fog was lifting – a magic, fresh morning. Bob's son Tim had stoked up the fire, so with its tangy smell of gum leaves wafting around we started thinking about breakfast when Scott yelled, 'Got one!'

Thankfully, his drag was set light, but he nearly did get pulled in. All eyes were on him as he fought it. Not only did he have to struggle with the fish, but all our advice as well. Five heart-pumping minutes later he was holding it for the camera, phew!

Congratulations all round, then Bob hooked up again and managed to land the biggest for the morning. 'That'll make the roses grow', he said. 'All we do is dig a hole and bury the fish. We have no dog to dig it up and the plants love it.'

Camping by the river, fantastic fun, catching carp to use as fertiliser, seemed like a good weekend to us.

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Drilling For Groundwater

by Derek Collin, Carina, Qld.

Drilling for groundwater can be a major capital investment, but life is sweet on the farm if a successful bore is established.

If you live on the land, the subject of drilling for water is never boring. How do you know if your farm has accessible groundwater? Rock, sand and gravel able to contain and transmit water constitute an aquifer, which is the target for all water drilling activities. There are three main aquifer types to look for before drilling.

ANCIENT RIVERS

Unconsolidated sand and gravel beds are associated with present or very ancient rivers. They are often found at depths of less than 50 metres and, when thick and extensive, can provide very good supplies due to the ease with which water can move through the formation. Recharge after rain is usually rapid. In many areas overexploitation has resulted in a severe lowering of the water table, making pumping very expensive. Careful management of the resource, in conjunction with water users groups, can extend the life of the supply by minimising wastage and preventing contamination with fertiliser and pesticides.

POROUS ROCK

Porous rock, such as sandstone, holds water in a similar way to a sponge. Yields are usually much less than those of sand and gravel. Sandstone aquifers of the Great Artesian Basin are thick and very extensive and are never likely to be dewatered, but pumping will become expensive as pressure in the system continues to fall.

FRACTURED ROCKS

All types of fractured rocks can provide supplies that are totally dependent on the size, number and interconnection of the fractures. Limestone provides a very special case as it dissolves in acidic rain, forming caves and tunnels such as found at Jenolan and on the Nullabor. If filled with water they can provide good supplies, although the water is likely to be hard. Elsewhere, underground rivers and lakes do not exist and it is futile drilling for them.

DRILLING SITE SELECTION

Although selection of a drilling site is best left to an experienced hydrogeologist, any intelligent person can at least complete a preliminary screening of alternative sites using some of the following steps.

Geological Maps

An examination of geological maps published by state and territory governments will give a quick indication of rock type and possible aquifers on any parcel of land. Hydrogeological maps are available for many areas and these provide more valuable data, such as depth to water, yield and water quality.

Drillers' Data

As part of the licensing process all water bore drillers are required to submit details of all bores drilled, including those where no supply was found. Details required include a soil and rock profile, depth of bore, aquifer data and water quality. This data is indexed under county, parish and portion and is available from the relevant water authority to all genuine enquirers, perhaps for a modest fee. Data for land surrounding any particular site should also be considered, especially if it is on the same rock type. Local drillers also have some of this information and will provide it to potential clients.

Topography

A walk over the site will reveal topography; prospects are better in valleys than on hilltops. Rock outcrops, weathering and fracturing can also be examined. If no rock is exposed, soil will often indicate the type of underlying rock as well as rainfall infiltration capacity – in clays this is poor, in sands good. Topography will also provide a guide to the size and nature of the catchment/recharge area – the bigger the better.

Vegetation

Deep-rooted plants and trees sometimes act as local indicators of shallow water and a correlation of good bores and old vegetation should be attempted.

Practicalities

For practical reasons a bore should be sited near to where water is needed, where there is suitable power supply and existing piping, and at least 200 metres from a septic discharge point or piggery. The site should have good access for the drilling rig and subsequent operations.

Expert Advice

Geophysical techniques such as electrical resistivity and interpretation of air photos are expensive and should be left to an expert.

SELECTING A DRILLER

Drillers are listed in the *Yellow Pages* under 'Borers' and at least three quotes for drilling should be obtained. Local drillers are preferred as this should reduce rig establishment costs and provide a knowledge of groundwater conditions in the area. The Australian Drilling Industry Association is working to promote good practice and selection of one of their members is advantageous. Avoid any offer of 'no water no fee' as it leads to endless argument about what constitutes an acceptable supply and, if your bore is successful, you are going to be loaded with the cost of other unsuccessful drilling. All drillers are

required to demonstrate competency in successfully completing a particular type of bore before being granted a licence and this should be confirmed before engaging them.

It is very difficult to give prices applicable to the whole of Australia, but $80 a metre for drilling, $25 a metre for steel casing and $19 a metre for PVC casing should be a rough guide to the price of a 152-millimetre-diameter bore. Such a bore is suitable for stock and domestic purposes because doubling the diameter of a bore only increases the yield by about 20 percent, while the price goes up out of all proportion to the possibly increased yield. Many stock and domestic bores are successful at less than 30 metres depth, but there is great variation on this value.

DRILLING ACTIVITIES

Few drillers these days will use a cable-operated percussion rig, which is slow and requires a water supply for removing cuttings, but is cheap to operate. Most common is a down-hole hammer, which flushes the hole with compressed air, and is quick, although dusty and noisy. A good local driller will give an estimate of the depth of drilling required, but it is a mistake to believe that if you go deep enough you will find water and if you go deeper you will find more.

On site the driller should confirm that the drill bits and rods are clean as it is possible to inoculate the hole with iron bacteria, which produce a gelatinous sludge that blocks the casing slots and greatly reduces the bore flow and requires expensive sterilisation to remove.

Drilling should penetrate the full thickness of the aquifer and then a few metres more to allow for pump placement and sludge collection. Electric submersible pumps must remain under water at all times as they rely on water for cooling. An excessive depth is to be avoided as water cascading down the bore creates bubbles which, when they collapse, can cause severe damage to the pump impeller. The casing, required to stop the hole collapsing, will be slotted opposite the aquifer to allow water to enter the bore. Wire screens, which are more efficient than slots, are much more expensive and are seldom justified for stock and domestic bores.

Deciding whether a bore is a success or dud is difficult, but a yield of less than about 0.6 litres per second is hardly worth casing and fitting with a pump. Yield determines pumping times, so allow about four hours a day for petrol engines, 8 – 12 for diesels, 8 – 20 for electric motors and 8 – 10 for windmills. The bore pump only delivers to storage, so an elevated tank or pressure pump is needed to give a water pressure head of 3 – 7 metres at the shower and washing machine.

WATER QUALITY AND TESTING

The salinity of the water must also be considered when deciding on the failure or success of a bore. The World Health Organisation sets an upper limit of 1500 milligrams per litre (numerically equal to parts per million) for total dissolved solids while the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council suggests 500 milligrams per litre.

Several other components, such as sodium, fluoride and nitrate, have upper limits; if doubt exists, a full chemical analysis should be undertaken. A bacterial count of *E. coli* is also desirable as this gives a good indication of the possibility of disease-producing organisms entering the supply. Some drillers carry a small electrical conductivity cell with them and the reading in microsiemens per centimetre multiplied by 0.6 gives a first measure of total dissolved solids in milligrams per litre.

BORE COMPLETION

Once the bore is cased it is good practice to run a test of yield. This involves pumping the bore for a few hours and measuring the rate at which the water level falls and then recovers when pumping stops. This data can be graphed and a fairly simple calculation made to determine the safe long-term pumping rate. Testing, with discharge of the water to waste, removes any fine-grained material from the aquifer, which increases yield by promoting the flow of water into the bore – this process is called development and, though often neglected, is well worthwhile as it improves performance over the lifetime of the bore.

The last step in bore construction is to cast a concrete slab around the projecting casing to prevent liquids falling down the annulus between the casing and the hole. This also forms the base for the engine and pump headworks. Security of the pump and electrical switch gear can be ensured by building a simple shed over the bore, but remember that the pump will eventually have to be lifted for servicing. For this the shed, or at least the roof, must be removable so that the long driveshaft and rising main can be lifted using a tripod and winch.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the NSW Soil Conservation Service for some factual data taken from their *Farm Water Supplies Manual.*

Believe In Your Dreams

by Sandy Kelly, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

For the past 32 years I have eagerly awaited the arrival of each new issue of *Grass Roots* magazine. I can remember in the earlier years daydreaming about a lifestyle of peace and tranquillity as I read each issue from cover to cover (I still do!) and wondering if I would ever be lucky enough to be able to live my dreams. I never lost sight of those dreams through the many changes, both good and bad, in my life and it was my dreams that kept me going.

I had three dreams that I believed would fulfill my life. First, I wanted to work in the outback amongst our Aboriginal cultures. At the end of my working career, I wished to be able to work in a developing country for a couple of years so I could share my skills, knowledge and experience with others less fortunate. Last, I hoped to be able to retire and read all my *Grass Roots* magazines at leisure and become a geriatric hippy, living a lifestyle I have read so much about in GR.

My dreams started to eventuate about 15 years ago when I applied for a position working out of Mt Isa for Frontier Services. I remember clearly the day I was told I had the position. I was so excited I told just about everyone I saw in the street of Cloncurry about my dream becoming reality. I felt like the luckiest lady in the world. I was to work in all the Aboriginal communities and stations that required our services from the top of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Queensland, to Birdsville in the south. The area I covered was twice the size of Victoria and my only companion was my dog Sally as we travelled the lonely and isolated dirt tracks of the region.

The freedom of the job allowed me to be a free spirit and appreciate the isolation and beauty of the countryside and all the people with whom I came in contact. I loved it very much and would not have wanted to be anywhere else. It was during this time I was nicknamed 'The Outback Angel', which I am very proud of.

My dreams continued to unfold as I went to work in the Kimberlys, WA, Palm Island, Queensland and Coen in the Cape York Peninsula. I know many times I had to pinch myself to make sure it was all true! I felt so honoured, privileged and extra special to be able to work within our wonderful Aboriginal culture, especially as I was

not Aboriginal. Many Aboriginal elders taught me so much about life and survival during this time. These skills have guided me to become a more resourceful person and showed me that life is not all about what we can buy or want, but about our families, friends and the land around us.

I never lost sight of my dreams, never took for granted that they would continue to be a reality. I felt so honoured that some had been granted and was happy with that.

My retirement years approached very quickly and I then set the wheels in motion to apply for a position working in a developing country. Over a period of a few years it appeared this would not become a reality. I applied many times, but was always knocked back because of not having that big piece of paper, a degree. I was disappointed, but accepted that it was the rule and there was nothing I could do about it. I decided I would now have to let go of this dream and concentrate on my retirement and building a pole-frame home on my rainforest block at Kuranda in the hinterland above Cairns.

Then one day just before I resigned from my position in Coen I received a phone call from Australian Volunteers International asking if I would be interested in a position for two years working in Cambodia. Of course, I quickly said yes, trying not to show the great excitement I was feeling. I then started the long process of going through the many organisational stages involved in working in a developing country. At last I received the final word, 'Congratulations, you have been accepted to work in Phnom Penh'.

Wow! I was so excited all I could do was cry and hug everyone I saw (all of whom thought I had now really lost the plot). I just could not believe that this dream had become a reality.

I left Australia on 19 August for two years to work as an adviser to an organisation called Cambodia Volunteers for Community Development. I had a mixed reaction from people when I told them about going. This I can understand as Cambodia is classed as the poorest country in the world, with 60 percent of the population under 16 years old and an average life expectancy of 57 years. The average annual income is $265 per capita. I will live as the people of the country do and receive a weekly allowance equivalent to theirs. If I can make a difference to someone's life by sharing some new skills and allowing them to smile and laugh again, then I have achieved my goal. Once again I feel so honoured, privileged and very lucky that I have been granted this opportunity to live out yet another one of my dreams.

My collection of *Grass Roots* magazines has helped me to keep on track, especially when I read the many stories of others who go in search of their dreams and achieve them. My *Grass Roots* will be my lifeline to what is happening in the alternative lifestyle here in Australia as I eagerly wait for each issue to arrive by mail in Cambodia. I know when I return in two years time I will really appreciate how lucky we are to be able to feel free and safe as we live in this beautiful country of ours. Thank you everyone for all your work in producing and contributing to *Grass Roots* magazine all these years, you are all the greatest.

Believe in your dreams, no matter how large, small or outrageous they might appear to others. Never let go of your dreams and one day they may come true.

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Playing Possum

by Sheridan Thomas, Warrimoo, NSW.

In the Sydney region there are many varieties of possums. Most people are aware of the common brushtail possum, but in some places remnant colonies of other species exist such as ringtail possums, sugar gliders, pygmy possums and feathertail gliders. The larger gliders now appear to be extinct in the Sydney area. Urbanisation such as that in the inner city has demonstrated that the only long-term survivor will be the brushtail where there are still a few urban parks and green backyards.

Brushtails have gained the unfair reputation of being pests. Due to the lack of old-growth trees with hollows in which to live, they end up in household roofs and have managed to survive on a diet supplemented with rubbish scraps and mulch.

Other species of possums have not been able to adapt to this unhealthy diet and are therefore no longer found in the inner city, but rather in the few areas containing remnant bushland. Unfortunately, with only isolated pockets of wildlife left, the genetic pool over time is limited and creating a bleak future.

In the suburbs, these species face different problems: domestic and feral cats, dogs and foxes in both national parks and suburbia have a major impact on wildlife numbers. Although other species of birds and reptiles are also impacted, the most attractive food source for these feral animals appears to be our native mammals.

WHY SO VULNERABLE?

Ringtails in particular have evolved to nest in dense shrubbery which is relatively close to ground level: this makes them easily accessible to climbing predators like cats and foxes. Ringtails have the added vulnerability of living in nests constructed of twigs and leaves, which stand no chance against introduced predators.

Although gliders tend to live higher in trees in tiny hollows, they rely on a specialised diet comprising trees and shrubs which are no longer found in abundance.

Both ringtails and gliders have a very low resistance to infections and cannot withstand wounds and punctures inflicted upon them by cats and foxes. The survival rate is not high after such an attack because of the stress associated with both the attack and the handling necessary for veterinary treatment and examination. The antibiotics commonly used for these types of infection tend to damage the internal gut flora of our native animals. Unlike domestic animals whose guts can withstand such medication, ringtails and gliders will not survive if their gut flora is damaged.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

Some simple, common-sense measures could mean the difference between survival and extinction for some members of the possum family.

- Lock cats and dogs in at night.
- Secure a large, noisy bell on your cat's collar or purchase a 'leap-activated' Liberator alarm.
- If you live where vulnerable species are present, plant appropriate native trees and shrubs.
- Do not support-feed any native animals as they become dependent and lose their natural foraging behaviour.

INJURED POSSUMS OR GLIDERS

Place the animal in a towel in a box, ensuring it cannot escape. Place the box in a warm, quiet, dark room and *do not disturb.* Call WIRES on 02-8977-3333, or your own local wildlife rescue service. Do not attempt to feed, handle or display the animal to children or visitors. The stress associated with human contact can result in death.

Please note if the possum or glider is a baby, place the box near (not on) a heat source to keep it warm.

Be very careful when handling adult possums; they stress very easily and their large claws and teeth can be quite dangerous if the animal feels threatened.

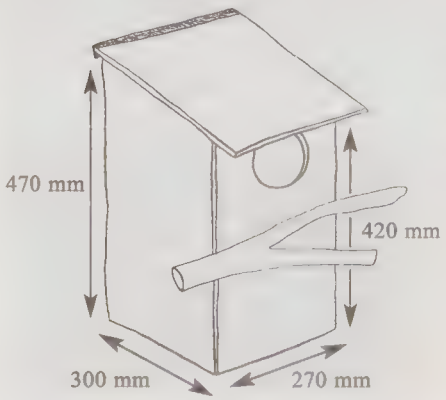
How To Make A Possum Box

by Maree Julian, Bathurst, NSW.

If you have blocked the possums out of your roof and there are no nearby tree hollows, you'll need to provide somewhere for them to nest. You can buy ready-made boxes, or make up one yourself. They need to be made from weather-resistant wood such as 12-millimetre plywood. Do not use particle board, which will quickly absorb water and fall apart, and avoid wood treated with toxic chemicals as possums have been known to chew on the sides of the box.

The top edge of the roof should be weather sealed with a folded strip of sheet metal or aluminium angle or a rubber flap. A rubber inner tube is okay.

To stop rain getting in, eaves should overhang by 100 millimetres. The entry hole, which doesn't have to be round, should be located directly under them. A few handfuls of dead leaves can provide some comfort and insulation.



A sturdy length of branch screwed firmly to the front of the box is an optional extra that will help the possum enter and exit more easily. Drill four holes of approximately five millimetres diameter through the floor near each corner, to allow any water that might get in to drain out.

Possum boxes should be attached to a tree with at least two attachment points, one at the top and one at the bottom, as described below. The box should rest against the main trunk of a tree at least three to four metres off the ground, to protect against cats and dogs. I suggest a loop of sturdy wire secured to the back of the box and looped over a branch as the primary support. To prevent damage to the tree, the wire should be sheathed in old hose pipe. Secure a 400-millimetre metal strip to the back of the box about 30 millimetres from the bottom. This should protrude approximately 65 millimetres each side of the box. Secure this to the tree using two heavy-gauge flat-head nails. Don't drive these nails in all the way; allow for the growth of the tree and the possibility of relocating the possum box in the future. You can also turn the box on its side when you build it so the possums have more floor space.

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Living With Floods

Rising and Falling Water

by Peter Crawley, Oakleigh, Vic.

After reading my previous two articles people living in flood-prone areas will by now be aware of the need to have an emergency plan prepared and emergency procedures practised. You'll have insurance documents organised, an emergency kit assembled, your home and garden prepared to cope with the emergency and you'll know what to do once a flood warning for your area has been issued.

DURING THE FLOOD

The key to handling the situation is not to panic and to stay out of the floodwater. If the water starts to rise near you while you are in the house, walking or in your car, evacuate to the emergency evacuation centre, high ground or the highest spot available, taking your emergency kit and a portable radio with you. Then, wait for help. Whatever happens don't try to swim to safety, wait for rescuers to come to you.

As a general rule, make sure your children don't play in, or near, floodwaters or spots of possible flash flooding such as culverts and drains. Never eat food that has been in floodwaters and make sure that you boil all tap water until water supplies have been declared safe.

If Indoors

If the water starts to rise inside your house before you have evacuated, retreat to the second floor, the attic or, if necessary, the roof. Take dry clothing, a torch, your prepared emergency kit and a portable radio with you. Then wait for help.

Turn on your battery-operated radio to get the latest emergency information and take note of any advice provided by local authorities on where to obtain medical care, assistance with food, clothing, shelter and how best to help yourself recover.

Be aware that snakes, rodents and other wild animals may seek shelter in your house during a flood.

If told to leave, do so immediately.

If Outdoors

Move to high ground and stay there. Avoid walking through any floodwater. If it is moving swiftly, even water 15 centimetres deep can sweep you off your feet.

Watch for downed power lines, since electrocution is a major cause of death during a flood.

Be careful when on high ground as again, snakes, rodents and other wild animals may seek shelter with you during the flood.

If In A Car

Don't drive or walk through floodwaters; find an alternative route if you come upon a flooded road. More people drown in their cars than anywhere else during a flood; this is why you must have multiple evacuation routes planned. If your car stalls in an area that may flood, abandon it immediately and walk or climb to higher ground. This is very important; many deaths have resulted from attempts to move stalled vehicles.

AFTER THE FLOOD

Up to now I've covered what you need to do before and during a flood, now it's time to look at what is often the most heartbreaking part – the post-flood cleanup.

Protect Yourself

The water might have receded, but the danger is not over yet. Don't drink floodwater or water from the tap or tank until it is declared safe to do so. If in doubt, boil all water for drinking and food preparation vigorously for five minutes. Don't eat any food that has been in floodwater as it is likely to be contaminated by chemicals, poisons and sewage.

Wear rubber gloves to reduce your health risk when handling any item that has been submerged in floodwater and make sure you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after they have been in the water. Seek medical attention if floodwater comes in contact with open wounds. Assume that all floodwater is contaminated and treat it as such whenever you handle any item that has been submerged in it.

Be very careful when moving things as they may be occupied by visiting spiders, rodents or snakes looking for safety in your home.

Upon Return

Once we get over the shock and the pain caused by the effects of the flood, the standard response is to try and get stuck into the work to get our assets back as they were. The first phone call following a flood is usually to an insurance company. However, be careful about finalising your insurance claim. It is recommended by many organisations, such as Archicentre and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, to quickly put in your flood damage notification, but wait until the building has dried out before finalising your insurance claim because the full realisation of the problems that you face may take a few weeks after the flood. The main strategy is to dry out the building as soon as possible and delay renovation and redecoration until the building is substantially dry.

So remember, beginning the cleanup process and drying out the building early is acceptable, but proceed cautiously. There can be more damage than meets the eye and moving too quickly may make the situation worse.

Safety First

The first step is to make sure that the building is safe to enter and is structurally sound. To this end you must check for washaways, in particular those that impact the house's foundations. A registered builder or the local councils' inspectors should do this.

Floodwater can turn your house into one gigantic electrical trap. In severe cases, just touching the house could cause electrocution. So don't even go close to the flooded home until both the electricity and gas have been shut off. In towns, electricity should be shut off for the entire neighbourhood by the local electrical supplier, not just at your specific power board, because many power boards, in particular in old houses, may be incorrectly wired or even bypassed. In addition, a bare wire from next door may electrify your home as well. In rural areas the electricity should be switched off at the local pole or transformer for the same reason.

Shorted-out wires are only one aspect of the dangers that could await you. A flooded home may be full of booby traps such as leaking gas, loose ceilings and slippery, mud-covered stairs.

As for leaking gas or the possibility of it, the first step is to turn the gas off outside. Go and make sure that it has been turned off, even if you turned it off before the flood; there are documented cases of gas valves being impacted by floodwater, resulting in a gas leak. In US documentation it actually states that the house should be physically disconnected from the gas supply during the cleanup phase. I found no documentation for this in Australia, however, my local gas man said it would be a good idea and he would certainly do it.

When entering a home that's been flooded, stay alert; the home may have severe structural damage or contain snakes or spiders, nails and dangerous debris. It will certainly be slippery. It is very easy to fall down muddy stairs or be struck on the head by a piece of falling plaster.

Aeration

Once you are confident your home is safe to enter and work in, the object is to open all the windows and doors to remove any gases in the house and let air in. While doing this I would also recommend that you open cabinets and drawers to help with the drying process. When opening doors and windows, do so slowly, as a sticking door or window may indicate structural damage or that the ceiling could be ready to fall. Stand clear and force the door open using a long pole and then wait for a few minutes to determine if it's safe to enter.

Don't smoke or use gas lanterns or any open flames until the house has been completely aired because they could cause any gases to explode.

Record The Damage

The next step is to document what you have found in the house. The best way is to take photos of the house and contents as you found them for your records. This is a good time to start an inventory of all the damaged contents. This inventory is really only an initial attempt and you need to update it many times over the coming weeks as you slowly process what has happened. Keep in mind that not all contents are destroyed by water, but may be able to be cleaned and disinfected.

Damage Limitation

To prevent any further damage, cover any holes in the roof, walls or windows with boards, tarp or plastic sheeting. Be very careful when doing this, as two people in the last Northern Rivers floods found out when one slipped off the roof and the other fell through the roof when it collapsed.

Remove Water

Once this is done, remove as much water as possible.

From Ceiling: To release water from the ceiling, use a nail on the end of a stick to poke a small hole at the edge of the sag to release the water. Don't poke at the centre of the sag since the ceiling could collapse. Repeat this process, working yourself toward the centre of the sag until all of the water is drained.

From Walls: To test for water trapped in walls, just remove the baseboard or skirting board and poke small holes in the plaster or wallboard about five centimetres above the floor. If water drains or even weeps out, cut or drill holes large enough for it to flow freely.

If your walls contain fibreglass insulation batts or another insulation material, you will need to have part of the plaster removed and the insulation removed. This is very important as nearly all types of insulation will absorb and hold large amounts of water and this water will destroy any repaired wall and floor finishes if left untouched in the wall.

From Basement: If you have a basement, drain it slowly, using a pump or by hand-bailing. It is possible that the pressure of the water in the ground around the basement could cause the basement walls to collapse. If there is still floodwater

outside the building, or the soil is still waterlogged, remove the water in the basement very slowly. One method is to remove 60 to 90 centimetres of water and mark the new water level. If, after 24 hours, the water does not rise above this mark, it should be safe to repeat the process until all the water is drained. The key is to be slow and steady.

Check Structure

Once the basement is cleaned out, inspect the walls for signs of any diagonal cracks that begin from an upper corner of a foundation wall. Then check the foundation with a hammer for a solid feel and a constant sound that is solid and not suspect, hollow sounding or soft. If you find anything or suspect anything, quickly refer to a structural engineer.

Clean Basement

Once the basement is water, mud and silt free it is important to quickly clean the basement walls with a disinfectant, or power-wash them, or do both. Scrubbing with a brush and rinsing with a hose can remove all remaining dirt or residue.

Subfloor

Now check the under-floor space. This area needs to be well ventilated and a path must be provided to drain any water held under the house. It is very important to keep the under-floor space well-ventilated. The standard sized ventilation holes are just not suitable for this purpose, so, if you don't have a brick or concrete house, remove any covering around the under-floor area. If you have a brick or concrete house, you may need to contact your local builder to create a strong flow-through ventilation, or use a fan to increase the air flow, being careful with electrical fans on wet soil. In either case, you must make sure that there is no rubbish under there that can trap and hold water. This is really important as your timber floors could otherwise dry unevenly, resulting in twisting and warping; even worse, it could result in long-term structural damage like rotted floor framing.

Floor Coverings

Now the object is to remove as much debris and mud as possible from the house, while doing this you will need to remove the floor coverings from the flooded areas. Remember to keep samples of any carpet or other floor covering you remove for insurance purposes.

A spokesperson from Archicentre urges people to be wary of contractors offering to remove and steam-clean carpets because following the steam cleaning and drying people can find the carpets have shrunk so much they no longer fit.

Next time: more about reconnecting essential services.

MAJOR CAUSES OF INJURY OR DEATH

There really shouldn't be any deaths caused by any flood other than flash flooding. However, deaths do occur because individuals don't understand the issues associated with floodwater's depth and current or the other hidden dangers that can occur during flooding.

Water Depth and Current

The great majority of deaths from flooding in Australia result from people attempting to drive, walk or swim through floodwater. The depth and current are easily misjudged and are capable of sweeping away and submerging even large vehicles. In small streams the water level can change suddenly. Some deaths have even resulted from people camping in, or near, normally dry riverbeds. People have also died when flash floods occur in stormwater drains and irrigation channels.

Hidden Dangers

Many of those thought to have drowned in floods, especially flash floods, may actually have been killed by the violence of the water, or as a result of having been struck by, or having struck, objects in the water or the river bed. Thus, simply being a good swimmer may not be enough to ensure your survival. *Do not enter or drive into floodwater,* especially where an obvious current exists. If your vehicle becomes stranded in floodwater, leave it and move to higher ground before the water level rises further.

Beware of other potential injuries or adverse effects from floodwater.

- Possibility of exposure (hypothermia) after becoming soaked.
- Risk of illness after drinking from water supplies polluted by sewage and other hazardous wastes in urban and recreation areas.
- Injuries from vehicle accidents caused by road washouts, soft edges and damaged bridges.
- Electrocution by overhead or fallen power lines. The rule here is to assume that all fallen power lines are live and do not go near them. If in a boat on floodwater, beware of power lines. They may be dangerously close to an aerial, mast or cabin, or might even be in the water.

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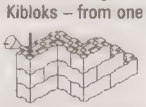

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Beware Of Pulpy Kidney

by Megg Miller, Nagambie, Vic.

A surprising number of small flock owners are unaware of the disease pulpy kidney, a notorious killer of fast-growing lambs, and shrug off the occasional death as bad luck. To do so is bad management because with the appropriate information and preventative strategy, pulpy kidney can be avoided. The well-known five-in-one vaccine targets this disease along with several others. 'Oh, but I don't want to use chemicals on my stock', may be the response of many GR sheep owners. A chemical-free status isn't achieved overnight and it would be unwise to risk the lives of your best lambs (pulpy kidney usually strikes the largest and fastest growing) as these are the ones you will want to breed from. Get your soil right, your pasture established and select for a strong and healthy constitution in the flock, so in time you may reduce or even eliminate the need for conventional disease prophylactics.

WHAT IS PULPY KIDNEY?

Pulpy kidney is the field name given to a bacterial disease that kills lambs, sheep and several other farm livestock; it originated because of the rapid decomposition of kidneys after death. An alternative term that is frequently used, enterotoxaemia, more succinctly describes the action of this disease: entero relating to intestine and toxaemia referring to bacterial toxins in the blood. *Clostridium perfringens* type D is the bacteria responsible. Disease occurs when this bacteria, a normal inhabitant of the gut, undergoes massive multiplication that results in the production of toxins. These toxins invade and damage the vascular system, deleteriously affecting blood vessels and, in particular, the capillaries in the brain. When these are damaged collapse and death occurs.

Some farmers can look at the carcass of a dead lamb or sheep and pick out signs that are common to this disease. The animal will have suffered convulsions prior to death and so the soil may be dug up where hooves have kicked back and forth, the head is likely to be arched back or pulled to one side, and exudate and froth may be discernible around the mouth. Diarrhoea may also be present. Victims of the disease decompose very quickly, blowing up, giving the skin a distinctive purple colour.

MODE OF INFECTION

This is a tricky disease because the causative bacteria are normally in the microflora of the gut with moderate numbers passed out with the bowel contents when an animal voids. This daily passage of bacteria in faeces assists in keeping the number left in the gut at a manageable level. Initially, the bacteria is probably ingested by lambs when sucking their mothers' teats. The regular deposition on soil and pasture via faeces means it's easy for ewes to rest on contaminated ground and for teats to get dusty or muddy, or pick up faecal matter. When the lambs drink they ingest *C. perfringens* type D bacteria.

TRIGGERING THE DISEASE

Most sheep carry this bacteria all their lives with no adverse consequences. Several situations are recognised as likely to trigger massive multiplication and thus a disease state. The major catalyst is a sudden high intake of starch or carbohydrate in the diet. This may occur when lambs are weaned onto lush pasture or finished on grain, or during dry conditions when adult sheep are fed grain or suddenly given access to a green pick. The high starch intake creates a compatible medium for the bacteria to multiply rapidly. When this occurs, movement of food through the gut is slowed down or stops. With no bacteria being excreted, plus the rapid replication that is occurring, a build-up occurs, producing toxins that enter the bloodstream and initiate the process that leads to death. When examined after death, many lambs still have feed in the rumen and undigested matter in the ileum in the small intestine.

TARGET AGE AND SPECIES

Sheep are the most adversely affected, though goats are also vulnerable. Calves too are occasional victims. Lambs are most at risk, usually the good doers with the highest feed intake. Very young lambs should carry some protective antibodies passed from their dam as it's usual to vaccinate pregnant ewes four to six weeks before lambing. This antibody level drops rapidly, so it's essential to vaccinate at marking and to give a follow-up around weaning when lambs are often put onto pasture or offered supplementary grain.

VACCINATION PROGRAM

The five-in-one vaccine has been made specifically to protect against the major clostridial diseases: pulpy kidney, tetanus, black leg, malignant oedema and black disease. It should be given in two initial doses, the first at marking and the second, a booster, no more than six weeks later. Stretching the gap to 10 weeks will leave lambs with minimum protection at a vulnerable period. Do not give a double dose; the efficacy will be diminished. An annual booster dose must be given to adult animals.

IF THE WORST OCCURS

It's rare for stock to survive pulpy kidney. Lambs usually die quickly after a short period in which they exhibit frothing of the mouth, convulsive movement of eyes, jaws and head, then staggering, general convulsions and death. Mature animals may show similar symptoms, but over a longer period, or become quiet and uncoordinated before going down, surviving as long as 24 hours before dying.

If all this sounds depressing, it needn't be. Get a vaccination program organised, working in with neighbouring flock owners to share pharmaceuticals, and start improving your soil and pasture and the constitution of your stock.

Be A Fuel Miser

by Mary Horsfall, Euroa, Vic.

The recent unprecedented increase in fuel prices affects all our lives; even those who don't drive or own cars must buy food and other goods which have increased in price because of higher transportation costs. Family budgets are feeling the pinch. Many pundits are predicting that this is the beginning of the end of oil-based lifestyles and economies and the word 'crisis' is often being used to describe the situation. Perhaps it is a crisis, perhaps it is the beginning of the end. It can also be seen, though, as an opportunity for change, and those living a self-sufficient lifestyle are better placed than many to adapt positively to changing circumstances.

I've read predictions that the social structure will revert to a more village-based economy, where the majority of people's needs will be met through locally produced goods and local services, and that more and more people will be growing their own food in the backyard. Cuba is sometimes held up as an example of a nation that has successfully adapted to a situation of permanent oil shortage. One of the key factors in this success is the amount of food that is grown in every available space, even in cities, so most food needs are met locally. *Grass Roots* people are often already doing this, so are cushioned to some extent from increased food costs, as well as having a healthier diet.

Don't think a move to your dream acreage in the country and living a more self-sufficient lifestyle is the answer to fuel conservation. Unless you live the life of a hermit and can be very self-sufficient indeed (including making your own biodiesel fuel) country living usually involves more travel and greater reliance on vehicles. Perhaps a move to a large block in a country town will allow you to grow and preserve more food while travelling less – explore your options realistically.

There are hybrid and electric cars available that might be a viable option for some, especially for getting around in a city. At this stage, though, these options are beyond the budgets of many. Increasing demand will see them becoming more widely available and affordable. In the short term most of us are still going to rely on our petrol-fuelled cars, but there are numerous simple ways we can learn to be fuel misers and thus save ourselves money while conserving this limited resource.

FUEL MISER TACTICS

Ways of saving money on fuel can be broken into two broad categories: looking for alternatives and driving economically.

Alternatives

- Use public transport whenever possible, even if it means driving to the nearest station.
- Ride a bike or walk for short trips.
- Find out if there are any car sharing or car pooling arrangements in your area. If not, start one. Put an ad in a local paper or shop window asking to contact people who travel a similar route to you for work or school. Newtown CarShare is a scheme in the Sydney region that allows people with only occasional need for a car to have access to a shared vehicle. To find out how it works look at the website: www.newtowncarshare.info
- Walk your children to school; it's much better for their health. If safety is a concern and you don't have time to walk with them every day, approach other parents nearby to share supervision of the walk. The difference in traffic congestion between school holidays and term time is very noticeable, so this strategy is a good air pollution preventer as well.
- Consider whether it's possible to change jobs so you work closer to home, change your working arrangements to work from home some of the time, or start a home-based business.
- Do you really need to run two cars? Think about ways you could manage with one; these might involve some of the suggestions already made. Even occasional taxi fares are probably less expensive than running a second car in many circumstances.

Driving Economically

Based on figures from the Victorian Automobile Chamber Of Commerce and assuming a price of $1.30 per litre, a motorist averaging 20,000 kilometres per year in a vehicle consuming 12 litres per 100 kilometres will spend $650 per year more on fuel than one with a fuel efficiency of 9.5 litres per 100 kilometres.

These fuel saving ways are not new, but higher petrol prices have made them even more significant so they can make a real difference to your budget.

- Keep vehicles well maintained and regularly tuned.
- Check tyre pressure regularly and keep it at the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Slow down, higher speeds use more fuel.
- Use brake and accelerator smoothly.
- Remove unused roof racks.
- Remove all unnecessary weight from inside the vehicle, don't carry around gear when you don't need it.
- Turn off the engine when stuck in traffic.
- Plan your journeys to do as many tasks as possible in the shortest distance. Make lists so you don't get home and remember something that needs another trip.
- Reduce air conditioner use, but at the same time don't travel at speed with the windows down as this also reduces fuel efficiency.
- When buying a vehicle look for the fuel efficiency rating. The cheapest option to purchase might be an older model with inefficient fuel consumption, but it will go on guzzling fuel, and your money, long after a more expensive but fuel-efficient vehicle has been paid for. Diesel-fuelled vehicles are very fuel efficient and the modern ones are less polluting as well.

WHAT'S ON

MOORA MOORA FESTIVAL

'Earth, Air, Fire and Water' is Mt Toolebewong Festival's theme this year. The annual festival will feature talks, displays, demos, activities for children, guided tours of owner-built homes, live performers, food and a market. It's on Saturday 25 February 2006, from 11 am till late. Go to Healesville via Maroondah Hwy, turn right into Don Rd and follow the signs. No dogs, cats, drugs or alcohol. For more info contact Bindi Woodland, ph: 03-5962-4104. Website: www.mooramoora.org

HIGHLANDS ARTS EXPERIENCE

Love art? Come and enjoy the wonderful Highlands Arts Experience, with great art, food and activities for the kids. Why not enter the Andrew Van Baarle Sculpture prize, with $2000 for first prize for an outdoor sculpture incorporating stone or wood. On 4 – 5 March, 2006, for more details see website: www.highlandsarts.org.au

NO PENGUINS HERE

Churchill Island, just off the coast of Phillip Island, boasts a terrific farmers' market on the fourth Saturday of every month and an arts market on the fourth Sunday. The Island is Victoria's first working farm, so take a stroll through the historic homestead and gardens, and see Clydesdales and Highland cattle. Visit www.penguins.org.au for more info.

FOLK FOR GR FOLK

Woodford Folk Festival boasts more than 2000 performers, with concerts, dances, workshops, forums, social dialogue and debate, a children's festival, art and craft workshops and more. Located between the Brisbane Valley and Sunshine Coast Hinterland, an hour and a half's drive from Brisbane, the folk festival takes place in a rural valley surrounded by natural bushland and native wildlife. Held from 27 December to 1 January, 2006, ph: 07-5496-1066, or visit www.woodfordfolkfestival.com

CHRISSIE TREAT

Get in the spirit and support cancer patients by visiting the Victor Harbor Christmas Tree Exhibition, on 17 and 18 December, at the Victor Harbour Town Hall. Gold coin donation for entry and all proceeds go to the Southern Cancer Support and Resource Group. Contact Victor Harbor Visitor Information Centre, ph: 08-8552-5738.

PEATS RIDGE FESTIVAL 2005

Peats Ridge Sustainable Arts and Music Festival kicks off on 9 – 11 December in a celebration of music, arts and sustainable living. The festival boasts over 100 acts, 6 stages of music, and an entire area devoted to sustainable living, with eco living workshops, market stalls, healing area and an extensive children's festival. The festival has camping facilities, and is set in Glenworth Valley, one hour north of Sydney. Ph: 02-9281-3740, website: www.peatsridgefestival.com.au

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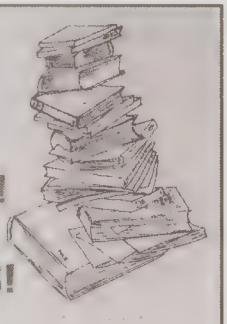

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RECENT RELEASES

Titles described can be ordered through your nearest bookstore.

TREAD LIGHTLY
A Guide to Travelling Green in Australia
Robin Stewart

Planning on going camping this Christmas? Or dreaming about the big around-Australia trip? The last thing you want to do is leave a trail of destruction. Robin Stewart has travelled across Australia, perfecting the art of enviro-conscious travel, to put together this guide to respecting and protecting the places you visit, no matter where, when or how. *Tread Lightly* covers what to take, where to stay and how to dispose of waste. Robin also discusses eco-resorts, energy use, water purification, how to stay safe and healthy, and travelling with pets. Need references? Robin's husband built their caravan from scratch and they travel responsibly with a dog and two cats!

P/b, 228pp, Black Inc, 5/289 Flinders Ln, Melbourne 3000. Ph: 03-9654-2000. RRP: $22.95.

CREATIVE BEADING
Over 60 Original Jewellery Projects and Variations
Juju Vail

Beads are all the rage right now, so why not save money by making your own jewellery? Think of the gifts you could whip up for friends and family. This book is well laid out with step-by-step drawings and bright photos of the finished items. The range of delectable bead earrings, necklaces and bracelets is comprehensive, and variations for each piece are included, giving you ideas for other directions you could take the pieces. The difficulty level varies, with some quick and easy pieces as well as quite complex ones, such as instructions on how to combine seed beads into tassels, rosettes, flowers and so on. Also included are guides to tools used, techniques required and the types of beads available.

P/b, 347pp, Hamlyn, c/- Bookwise International, PO Box 2164, Regency Park 5942. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: $35.00.

THE WEATHER MAKERS
Tim Flannery

This book on climate change is a fascinating read, but paints a pretty grim picture. Flannery asserts that if we continue using resources as we are now, in our own lifetime the world will warm 2 to 3° C. Although this sounds quite cosy, ramifications include melting of both ice caps, the extinction of three out of five species of plants and animals, more droughts and destructive weather events like floods and hurricanes and less arable land leading to widespread starvation. What's needed for our own survival is to cut our CO^2 emissions by 70 percent immediately. The good news is, this is achievable and even profitable for both businesses and households. On a personal level, using less electricity, signing on to green power and reducing fuel consumption can make a massive difference, so think of the poor frogs and turn those unused lights off.

P/b, 332pp, Text Publishing, Swann House, 22 William St, Melbourne 3000. Ph: 02-9380-8210. RRP: $32.95.

TROPICAL BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA
Sue Taylor

This tiny book is bursting with bright pictures of tropical birds. A nice stocking filler, it fits easily in your pocket when you're out spotting, but manages to hold plenty of information on more than 40 strange and popular Aussie birds. Useful point-form details of each species include geographic range; habitat and nest; breeding, incubation and fledging; diet; size; and voice. Perfect for telling a riflebird from a monarch.

P/b, 100pp, Penguin Mini, PO Box 701, Hawthorn 3122. Ph: 03-9811-2415. RRP: $9.95.

ASTROLOGY BIBLE
Judy Hall

Being a Libran, RR can't possibly go through the day without a horoscope fix. This short, fat book not only comprehensively covers sun signs (describing Libra as charming, RR might add), but also includes details on the elements, energy flows, planets, houses, health issues and romantic relationships. If by chance you have never done so (shock, horror!), the instructions on putting an astrological chart together for yourself are surprisingly simple.

P/b, 347pp, Godsfield, c/- Bookwise International, PO Box 2164, Regency Park 5942. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: $29.95.

THE GARDEN GURU
Phil Dudman

If you're out in the bush, you don't have the chance to lean over the neighbour's fence and ask just what makes their citrus tree bloom so well. Don't worry – this little book does the snooping for you. ABC radio host Phil Dudman has gathered as much gardening wisdom as he could find from gardeners all around Australia. There are hints and tips on everything from container growing to compost to companion planting, all in an easily accessible format.

P/b, 112pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001. Ph: 02-8333-3969. RRP: $16.95.

COMMERCIAL HYDROPONICS
John Mason

If you have followed the articles in GR lately on hydroponics and decided it just might be your thing, this book is the next step. Don't be alarmed; although entitled 'commercial', it is just as relevant for backyarders. This second updated edition includes advice on growing 16 additional plants, taking it to 102 different flowers, vegies, berries and fruits featured in total. Mason also discusses the various different culture alternatives, the site, managing a commercial farm, and much useful troubleshooting information. The guide includes both colour and black and white photos and numerous drawings and diagrams, making it clear and easy to follow. Why practise hydroponics? Mason says it can make better use of limited water resources and reduce the need for chemical pest control, making hydroponic produce potentially less tainted by chemical residues than traditional farming. Give it a go.

P/b, 198pp, Kangaroo Press, c/- Simon & Schuster, PO Box 33, Pymble 2073. Ph: 02-9983-6648. RRP: $34.95.

A GARDEN IN THE HILLS
A Tale of Selling Up, Digging In and Growing Things
Christine McCabe

Get out the deckchair, here's a good read for the summer holidays. McCabe is a travel writer for *The Australian* who acquired a garden 'on the hop'. She and her family had been dreaming of a country sea change, saw 'The Oaks' in the Adelaide Hills and bought it then and there. The catch was that McCabe and co had no gardening experience, and 'The Oaks' was entered in that year's Open Garden Scheme. McCabe documents her speedy learning curve, various hilarious disasters and growing love of working and watching the seasons in the rambling six-acre garden. The book is lots of gentle fun and even includes some tasty recipes.

P/b, 326pp, Macmillan, Level 18, St Martin's Tower, 31 Market St, Sydney 2000. Ph: 02-9285-9113. RRP: $33.00.

SEA CHANGE
Australians In Pursuit of the Good Life
Cindy Dowling

Dowling tells the stories of 20 brave souls who have taken the plunge and made a sea change in their life, simplifying and improving it. Some, like Bob Rich and chef Alla Wolf-Tasker, are quite well known, others are anonymous, and others, like women's spiritual retreat owner Catherine Johns, will be familiar to GR readers. Many of those featured discuss the change to a low-cost rural lifestyle and there is much good information to be gleaned about the process from their widely varying experiences. Other stories of interest deal with negative responses from family and friends, helping the kids cope with change, and experiences with communal living.

P/b, 184pp, Exisle Publishing, 'Moonrising', Narrone Creek Rd, Wollombi 2325. Ph: 02-4998-3327. RRP: $24.95.

OPEN GARDEN SCHEME 2005–06
The Essential Guide to Australia's Open Gardens

A great gift for the gardener who has everything, this annual guide book will provide a year's worth of inspiring excursions. Each entry contains a short blurb on the open garden in question, as well as address, directions, size, opening hours, and some useful snippets such as whether dogs are allowed, plants are for sale, or it's suitable for prams and wheelchairs. This edition also has colour photos and feature articles on creating a country garden, the bush, composting and more.

P/b, 160pp, ABC Books, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001. Ph: 02-8333-3969. RRP: $16.95.

IN SEARCH OF NATURAL ARCHITECTURE
David Pearson

If you are dreaming of building your own home, shed, barbecue or even fence, this book will provide a wealth of inspiration from around the world. From tribal huts to modern houses, all sorts of building styles are reproduced in vivid colour photos. Although diverse, the styles are all linked by their use of natural materials such as wood, straw and adobe, and by the level of thought and meaning embodied in each structure. A word of warning though, after reading this, brick veneer just won't cut it. You'll want a teepee at the very least.

H/b, 160pp, Gaia, c/- Bookwise International, PO Box 2164, Regency Park 5942. Ph: 08-8268-8222. RRP: $35.00.

FARMING MEAT GOATS
Breeding, Production and Marketing
Barbara Vincent

Goat meat is becoming an important export industry, as well as a growing Australian market, and goat farming is suitable for both small- and large-scale farmers. This book covers selecting and preparing a property, choosing the breeding stock, breeding, health care and nutrition, drought feeding, condition scoring and marketing. The information on fencing and yards is particularly useful, as are details of programs readers may not be aware of, such as Kidplan. The appendix lists government departments, agencies, associations and others.

P/b, 274pp, Landlinks Press, PO Box 1139, Collingwood 3066. Ph: 03-9662-7500. RRP: $64.95.

ROUND THE MARKET PLACE

We hope you enjoy this feature introducing new products relevant to readers' lifestyles and interests.

RAIN AND MOISTURE SENSORS

Used in conjunction with automatic garden irrigation systems, soil moisture sensors and rainfall sensors play an important role in water conservation. In fact, in Melbourne it is now compulsory for all new automatic sprinkler systems to be fitted with either a rain sensor or soil moisture sensor, and other states are likely to follow suit. The Nylex GARDENA rain sensor can be positioned either in the soil or mounted anywhere that is exposed to rainfall to stop the automatic waterer from working when it is raining. The soil moisture sensor halts the cycle of the timer when the soil contains adequate moisture either from rain or from watering. This sensor is inserted into the soil and the desired moisture level is set by a control knob to detect moisture in the root zone. The soil moisture sensor will also operate the timer cycle when the soil is dry. Both products are UV radiation tested and guaranteed for one year. They are available from major hardware chains at a price of around $85.

For more information contact Julie Stephens on 0413-119-673, email: stephensj@ozemail.com.au

MINI HANDYPERSON RANGE

Unibond has released a new range of products, known as DIY Minis, in small-sized, easy-to-use containers that are perfect for touch-up repairs around the home and for hobbyists. Products include gap filler, liquid nails and silicone sealant. No special tools are needed for application as there are built-in nozzles on the containers. Look for them at hardware stores, priced at $7.95 each.

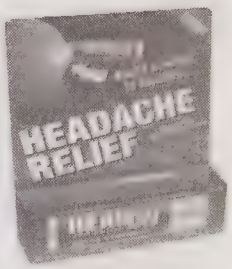
For more information on DIY Minis visit the website: www.makingdiyeasier.com.au

SOLE WINDOW

Horse owners will love this clever invention that protects an injured hoof from infection while enabling easy access for regular treatment. Sole Window is a plastic plate that fits between the hoof and shoe with a removable threaded lid or 'window' to facilitate dressing. A plastic rectangular sheet is used as a template to match the horse's hoof and allow the window to be located over the site of the wound. Once cut to size, the plate is sealed to the hoof with an adhesive two-part sealant to give a water-tight seal. The horse can be lightly exercised while the plate is in place. The Sole Window is available from the inventor at a cost of $30.

Contact Bryan Hilbert by email: bryanhilbert@iinet.net.au

TOPICAL HEADACHE RELIEF



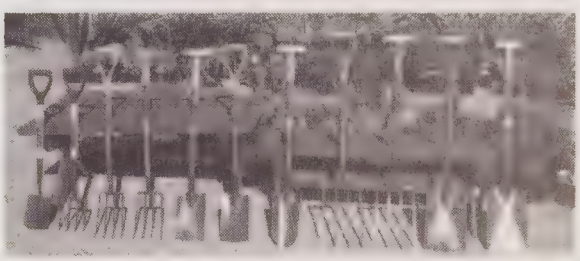
Headon is a headache and migraine relief product that is applied directly to the forehead. It is a homoeopathic formulation said to work by depressing the nerves that perceive pain. The effect is claimed to be instantly cooling and soothing, followed by pain relief. The formula is nongreasy, invisible when applied and can be used over make-up. The compact packaging enables it to be carried easily in a pocket or handbag. Headon is available in three strengths: Extra Strength, Migraine and Children's. Look for it in major pharmacies, health food stores and supermarkets. The recommended retail price is $9.95.

For more information ring 1300-555-597, or visit the website: www.chc.org.au

BULLDOG TOOLS

This brand of tools is made for professionals and serious gardeners. The strong steel tool heads are designed to absorb shock without distorting or breaking. The heads and sockets of all spades and forks are forged from a single piece of steel so the weakness of weld points is eliminated. Attention has been paid to ensure tools are properly weighted and balanced and angled for optimum work efficiency. The Premium range has ash shafts that mould to the hand with use. The Evergreen range has the same forged heads as the Premium range, but with nonslip grips instead of hardwood handles. The usual variety of garden tools and hand tools is available as well as some junior sizes for children. You need to be a keen gardener to pay $120 for a border spade in the Premium range or $80 in the Evergreen range, but they are guaranteed for 15 and 10 years respectively and could make a special gift for the gardener in your life. It's worth obtaining a brochure with the implements illustrated and prices given.

For details contact the distributor: Gardenwear, PO Box 803, Coolum Beach 4573. Ph: 07-5471-7916. Email: sales@gardenwear.com.au



DOWN HOME ON THE FARM

by Megg Miller.

Why is it that when you start a task requiring total concentration someone turns up and the process goes askew? Cake baking, making jam or even laying mortar between bricks; become distracted during any of these tasks and you end up having to toss the mixture out and start again. I set a recent Sunday afternoon aside for making strawberry jam and read and reread the recipe instructions so nothing could go wrong. The strawberries were prepared, the lemon juice added and the fruit simmered for the recommended time. I even recalled advice in past GR articles on the benefit of warming the sugar. It was added and the gently bubbling mix looked good. Next job was to skim off the frothy scum. 'Are you there?' a voice boomed at the back door. 'I've come to see what you want paved.' What was I to say – sorry I'm busy? The saucepan of jam was reluctantly abandoned, but fortunately cooking had been completed. Clearly, the worst thing that could happen would be not returning for a period of time and finding the jam set firm in the saucepan. What a thought! I went off to talk about bobcats and sand and pavers, the discussion fortunately short and sweet. The jam? Starting to set beautifully. I'd missed the opportunity for skimming the top, so just poured the warm mixture into the waiting jars. It tastes delicious, although next time I will ensure the scum is removed. And next time I might make it at night when there shouldn't be visitors or distractions.

After waiting years and years I felt ready to cope with fruit trees and purchased eight bare-rooted specimens in late winter. They probably wish they were back at the nursery as I'm cajoling selected branches to grow horizontally along espalier wires. I feel rather mean pulling and tying or snipping unwanted branches off, but not only do plants need to be productive they must look good too. The shaping and pruning will make it easier for netting as well. The birds get all the cherry plums and almonds from the long-established trees at present and the plan for the new ones is to prune them to a manageable size and use nets. Stage one is up and running.

The vegie garden is going crazy. Isn't everyone's now the weather is warmer and there's been rain? Frankly I can't eat enough to keep up with the growth and now the broad beans are at full pod it's overwhelming to be faced with so much good food. One corner of the vegie garden is groaning under the growth of the cardoons. I purchased them as seedling artichokes, but they've dwarfed their more edible cousin and have shot up above the top of the garden enclosure. No more chook poo for them, they're in excess of two metres high now. Please, have any readers actually cooked up and eaten the fleshy parts of their leaves, as the *Seed Saver's Handbook* recommends?

The well-bred town chooks observe tree planting and seed sowing with interest, but the moment they're let out, rush behind their sheds to the decomposing piles of leaf litter and weeds. They've discovered the one pile of dirt on the place, where I was artistically dumping excess soil to make a 'hill', and they forage and mine it as though it holds gold. I'm hoping they're scratching up oxalis bulbs; whatever it is, it keeps them busy and, I suspect, well out of the bossy magpies' way. A visit recently from my brother and his wife and much pampered little dog put a hiccup in the egg output and left the hens with a dislike of dogs. The pooch, we agreed, wouldn't be let free, not with expensive, rather silly chooks out for their weekly forage. Brother John takes doggie out to do her duty leadless, and, naturally, she spied an opportunity and rushed through the chooks. The hens squawked, we all ran out and yelled at the dog and then at John. It was bedlam. Come dusk, the head count was one short. John and I searched the bushes, under buildings and then the bushes again. The earthy colours of the hen's plumage would have enabled her to blend in well, but our concern was

whether foxes posed a risk. There were sighs of relief all round when the hen returned next morning and poor John knew he'd never be allowed to forget his lapse of attention.

I've been desperate for chickens and when one of these hens went broody brought over fertile eggs from the farm. No, she got bored with sitting. Most of the hens at the farm either haven't gone broody yet or sat for a week also, so I'm cursing I haven't got an incubator going. Once it gets hot there will be broodies everywhere, but it's the spring hatched chickens that are the best, not those that come out in summer. The turkeys, by contrast, have shown lots of inclination and managed to hatch poults, but the little blighters have squeezed out of their pens, toppled onto their backs and forgotten how to rise again, or just keeled over, much to their mothers' and my horror. Heavens, they can be hard to rear; I'd forgotten just what a challenge they are. No wonder they're fairly uncommon.

Rushing around endeavouring to keep clutches of turkey poults together and encouraging hens to go broody makes meetings with the pet sheep quite rewarding. 'How are you sheepie?' I ask, the response being a nuzzle around for a piece of bread. She listens to the litany of complaints and, while not exactly sympathetic, I'm sure she understands. She may not be so compliant in the forthcoming weeks. I've got to lure her into the shed so she can be caught for shearing. Once that's done, she's going to become a town sheep and keep the grass down. Time to resurrect the fly traps and get them up and working before she relocates. I know Christmas is going to pop up soon, but truly, I'm not ready. A few more weeks of spring weather would be far more useful. It takes a strong constitution to weather the build-up to Christmas, but what a joy to bring out old family traditions and share the day with kith and kin. We've yet to work out whose turn it is to host festivities and who will be bringing particular items of food. If we go with the flow, not only will we survive, but it all will be fun. Take it easy and enjoy your Christmas too.

PENPALS

Hi, my name is Jessica, I live on a hobby farm. I home school. I am 15 years old and looking for a penpal between 15 and 19. My hobbies are reading, music, milking cows and looking after animals.

Jessica (GR 172)
C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

Male, 41, left outlook, atheist, currently incarcerated, seeks contact with alternative lifestyle/outlook people in Victoria (especially south of Ballarat) and Tasmania. Interests include aviation, passive solar, alternative buildings/power/water and permaculture. View to doing some WWOOFing in a few years.

Neil Brown,
Locked Bag 1, KWINANA 6966.

Hi, my name is Ray, I am in my mid thirties and single. Hobbies are fishing, camping, music, reading, animals, farming, gardening and collecting old things. I'll answer all letters.

Ray (GR 172)
C/- PO Box 117, SEYMOUR 3661.

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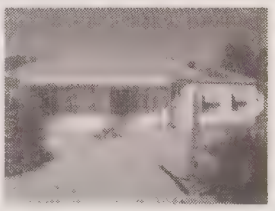

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Use the form provided below, or a separate sheet of paper, to print your advertisement clearly, **not in block capitals**, including correct punctuation. If you have more than one ad please print each one on a separate page. Remember to include an address or phone number in your advertisement. Count the number of words and multiply by 85 cents per word (phone number counted as one word) to work out the total cost of your advertisement. Send **with payment** to Grass Roots, PO Box 117, Seymour 3661, before the deadline and we'll include your advertisement in the next issue of Grass Roots. **Deadline for GR 173 is 22 December, 2006.** Please do not fax ads.

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PROPERTY FOR SALE

NEW SOUTH WALES

LAWRENCE – LOW-SET BRICK AND TILE HOUSE, 1011 m² block, 3 b/rs, aircon, c/port, big workshed/garage, garden shed. Established organic garden, over 50 f/trees. Power & town water. Grafton or Yamba 30 mins. $240,000. Ph: 02-6647-7074.

TINDERRY RANGE FOOTHILLS: 490 undeveloped freehold acres. Great views, council maintained rd access, power & ph to block, 45 mins to CBD ACT & 10 km to Michelago village. Centrally located to snow, city, surf. $375,000. Ph: 02-6235-9078. Email: rhoneychurch@bigpond.com

IDYLLIC BUSH SETTING, NATURAL VEGETATION: 104 ac for sale, 38 km sth of Dubbo, 25 km nth of Yeoval. Telephone connected. Stone cottage, c/van & sea container. Header tank for gravity-fed water. Tarred rd to gate, all-weather access. A low cost alternative to the rat race. $105,000. Ph: Penny, 0417-009-927. Email: spikeypen@yahoo.com

NORTHERN NSW, 30 mins to Murwillumbah & 1 hr Gold Coast airport. Share in MO, 10 ac, peaceful bush setting. Permanent crk, easy access to 2 ac elevated, cleared, level area, remainder bush. Large shed & c/van, water tanks, solar, ph. Secluded & private without being remote. $130,000. Ph: 07-5536-2760.

FORTY ACRES CLYDE RIVER, sth coast: Built from local timbers, crafted with love, o/fire place, potbelly, solar system, facing north in a small clearing within Sydney blue gum, mahogany & angophora forest. Organic vegie garden, f/trees, sheds, studio. Swim & canoe the river, enjoy birds nesting on the verandah. Can you coexist with antechinus, sugar-gliders, goannas, wallabies & the black snake living in the compost heaps? VCA applied for. $800,000. View: www.co-operista.com/shallowcrossing Contact Jen if you are passionate about conservation: 0431-317-774.

NORTHERN RIVERS, NSW: 26 ac bush block, river frontage, sandstone gully. Half-finished 4 b/r home, solar power, solar HW. $250,000 ONO. Ph: John, 02-6649-4101. Email: delrose1@bigpond.com

KANGAROO CREEK, PEACEFUL RETREAT: 26 km Grafton, 8 km Coutts Crossing, 20 ac registered wildlife refuge. Diverse forest throughout property incl r/forest by crk. Semi-cleared secluded area around 2 b/r Terracrete loft-home with quality timber & strawboard features. Garden/tool shed. Power, ph, water, mail, garbage/recycling services, school bus. Many extras. Can email/mail more info/photos. $365,000. Ph: 02-6649-3527.

All ads on these pages are accepted at the discretion of the publishers.

QUEENSLAND

PARADISE ON EARTH: Beautiful tri-level western red cedar house on approx 1 ac f/hold + 360 ac of spectacular common land filled with kangaroos, wallabies, lizards & birds of all descriptions. The land is a mixture of forest, lakes, flat, undulating & gully dissected hills in Kookaburra Park Eco Village. The house, which consists of 6 b/rs, toilet, laundry, bathroom with 2nd toilet, open plan lounge/dining/kitchen area, verandahs & solar HW, sits on a hill overlooking a lake filled with all manner of water birds & stocked with a variety of fish. The property is situated 3 km from the village of Gin Gin, which has all necessary amenities and is close to 4 primary schools & a high school. It is 47 km west of Bundaberg, which is on the coast adj to the Great Barrier Reef, Lady Elliot Island & Fraser Island. Price $350,000. Ph: Jim or May, 07-4157-3248, 0401-488-858. Can email photos.

HOWARD: **140 SECLUDED FLAT BUSH ACRES** (50 lightly cleared), 7 km school & shops, ½ hr to Hervey Bay or Maryborough. Solar powered 3 to 4 lge b/rs. Five-bay machinery shed + workshed, 4 dams, 1000 gal tank water. Fully fenced. Fordson tractor & implements. $350,000. Ph: 07-4129-4982.

NORTH STRADBROKE ISLAND: Artist's studio + dble car garage (power, lights, hot water), estab garden trees, shrubs. $220,000. Ph: 07-5485-3773. Email: jansweet@bigpond.com

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PROPERTY FOR SALE

QUEENSLAND

FOR SALE: DAINTREE RAINFOREST RESIDENTIAL BLOCK, 1 ha, mostly cleared gently sloping block, mtn views, development approvals. $120,000. Ph: 07-4098-9091, leave message.

WALLANGARRA, QUEENSLAND: Beautiful, warm 4 b/r home on generous ¼ ac block. Gas cooking, wood heater, lge kitchen/dining room. Close to schools, shops, PO. Fifteen mins from Granite Belt wine country, 3 hrs from Brisbane. Quiet, friendly country town. $135,000 ONO. Ph: 07-4684-3389.

FOUR HUNDRED ACRES NATIVE FOREST, 60 km nth Bundaberg, 10 ac cleared, rest cannot be cleared. Two good bores, dam, shed, tank, ph, nat pk 2 boundaries, 3 km from ocean. $250,000 ONO. Ph: 07-5446-7316.

KOOKABURRA PARK: Octagonal 2 b/r delight. Designed to enhance subtle energies & occupied by original owner. Earthen brick, polished cypress pine flooring, silky oak casement windows, sunkissed 10 ft wrap-around verandahs. Elevated views & very private 2654 m² f/hold set amongst 485 ac of ecovillage only 2.5 km from Gin Gin. Underground mains power, ph & community water supply, 5000 gal r/water, dble c/port, lawn locker + extensive permaculture designed organic orchard. Country lifestyle w/out isolation in a sense of community. $235,000. Ph:07-4156-6556. Website: www.organicodyssey.com.au

Kookaburra Park

BAFFLE CREEK, NATURAL INDEPENDENCE: 16.49 ha (40.74 ac) formerly organic farm. Ringlock fencing forming 6 paddocks, 4 dams & seasonal crk. Modest orchard. New water pump & ride-on mower incl. Dwelling 10.8 x 12 m with $30,000 EPA solar system connected. Norseman s/c heater. Cast iron claw-foot bath. Wood chip water heater, 8000 gal r/water storage in 3 tanks. Less than 1 km to shops, country club & boat ramp to the Baffle Creek. $190,000. Ph: 07-4156-6556. Website: www.organicodyssey.com.au

TASMANIA

ST HELENS, TASMANIA: New wood cabin (lock-up stage) on north-facing bush block paradise (7 ha), with distant sea views, bordering nat pk. Peace & tranquillity, yet only 6 km from town & beaches. Further potential to develop! $130,000. Ph: 03-6376-1316.

DEADLINES: GR 173 – 22 DECEMBER
GR 174 – 28 FEBRUARY

KING ISLAND, TASMANIA: 80 ha centrally located on island. Demeter certified BD farm, outstanding location, one of the last genuine clean green pieces of land in the country. Reliable rainfall, ample water, 4 b/r home, shedding, gardens & orchard. Owner reluctantly selling. Don't miss the opportunity. $685,000. King Island RE, 32 Edward St, CURRIE, King Island. Contact Dick: 03-6462-1474.

GROVE: BEAUTIFUL EIGHT-HECTARE HILLSIDE, battle-axe bush block. Creek bounds 1 side, 30 mins drive SW of Hobart. Plans avail. $45,000 ONO. Ph: 02-6231-8673.

TASMANIA, NORTH-EAST, 15.62 ha (38 ac) f/hold. Deep basalt soil. Town water, 3-phase power. Four b/r house (1890), sound but needs refit, overlooks town. Eastern boundary 500 m tree-lined trout river, platypus pools, with 140 m titled access. Cobbled rd, 100 yr old trees, fenced paddocks, water trough. Agisting Murray Greys, producing top-quality hay. Numerous sheds. Twelve mins to Scottsdale, all services, 20 mins coast & beaches (Bridport). $320,000 ONO. For digital photos & A3 copy of block ph: 0431-098-111 AH.

ARTHUR RIVER – ON THE 'WILD WEST COAST' of Tas: 3 b/r fully furnished shack, lge garage. Wonderful beaches & river. A fishing & 4WD paradise. $198,000. More info ph Dawn, 03-6458-3194.

VICTORIA

HOUSE FOR SALE BEMM RIVER AREA: Two ac, fully renovated, 3 b/r house, new kitchen, bathroom, electric stove, R/C aircon, floor coverings, internal & external painting, electric hot water unit, water tank, security doors & lock-up garage. Ideal holiday, investment or retirement house. Quiet town with only 3 other houses, close to the highway & central to all coastal & mtn areas. $190,000 ONO. Ph: 0427-983-652.

Bemm River

PHOTOS FOR GRASSIES
A 5.5 x 3.5 cm photo costs only $15. Just send a digital jpeg file or real photo with your ad, or call us on 03-5792-4000.

DUNACH VIA CLUNES: 2 hrs from Melbourne, 10 ac undulating, peaceful property. Many mature eucalypts, box & wattles, surrounded by bush. Two dams, comfortable 2 b/r, 6 sq Hardiplank house. Well-equipped kitchen with gas fridge/stove/hot water & firebox heater. Steel shed/garage 5 x 8 m. Generator, wired for mains/solar. 18,000 lt tank water. $132,000. Ph: 03-9397-7937.

Dunach

OPPORTUNITIES

GRASS ROOTS LIFESTYLE north-west NSW. Cottage garden, milking cow, hens, all that is needed for self-suff lifestyle on lge organic farm. School bus 8 km away. Learn & save for your own property or long-term arrangement. Ph: 0429-938-604.

WANTED: MATURE COUPLE, who like living in the bush & helping retired couple around house & garden. We offer free accom in return. For more info please ph: 02-6796-2204.

FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

COLEDALE, 70 MINUTES FROM SYDNEY: One ac, gardener's delight, 1 b/r spacious granny flat suit mature single. In new year studio avail – suit couple. Ph: 02-4267-4512.

WORK FOR RENT: New biodynamic venture on scenic mtns nth of Tamworth. Must like pigs, have own 4x4, be physically fit & be able to work independently. Ph: Lyndal/Noel, 0428-426-839.

FOR RENT EARLY JANUARY, 120 ac beautiful bush block 1 hr sth of Cooma, NSW. Two storey granite & timber home, wood heating, cooking & hot water, gas fridge, solar power, generator. Thirty km nearest schools, shops. Can distance educate through Queanbeyan. $150 p/w, long lease. Ph: 08-8258-7501.

LOVELY THREE BEDROOM FARMHOUSE on 3 ha, Opossum Bay, Tas. Overlooks Derwent Estuary. Available December, 6 months or longer, $200 p/w. Ph: Jo, 03-5255-1768. Email: phil@deakin.edu.au

BUDGET ACCOMMODATION/OPPORTUNITY to join lge community near Nimbin, NSW. Rent b/r, rest of cottage shared occasionally with me. Prefer bush-savvy person wanting community life. Ph: 02-6689-0394.

OUTER SUBURBAN MELBOURNE, Vic: farm sitter/helper needed. Ph: Kaye, 0414-437-908.

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FOR RENT/CARETAKER WANTED

PERSON(S) TO SHARE 120 ac rural property in St Helens, Tas: Idyllic setting, bordering nat pk & river, 5 km from fantastic beaches, various housing possibilities, worksheds, art barn, meditation room. Ph: 03-6376-1316. Email: jomo52@web.de

HELP REQUIRED for establishment of permaculture gardens on sml coastal acreage, 1 hr sth of Perth, WA. In exchange for site with power & water for campervan, c/van, bus or tent. Ph: 0412-479-350.

WANTED TO SHARE/RENT: Mature garden lover, n/s, s/d wanted. Share new home, permaculture ac 6 km Kyneton, central Victoria. $120 p/w + costs. Ph: 03-5423-9474. Email: maggiedegnan@hotmail.com

WANTED TO RENT/ CARETAKE

HOUSE SITTERS! Need one? Want to be one? Then come & visit 'Aussie House Sitters': www.aussiehousesitters.com.au

TASMANIA – COUPLE AVAILABLE for house & farm sitting. Have references. Contact Marlene, 0419-787-965.

HOUSE/FARM SITTER AVAILABLE, please contact Gary, ph: 02-9990-9118. Email: ixlinxs@yahoo.com.au

RURAL COTTAGE WANTED, outer suburban Melb for part-time mature student, low or no rent in exchange for light caretaking/gardening duties. Reliable & honest tenant. Ph: 02-6742-1459.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

HOBART, TASMANIA: After 20 years in 'Certified-Organics', Tasmania's only certified-organic shop is now for sale due to retirement of owners. Fantastic opportunity for environmentally aware couple, or 1.5 – 2 people. Turnover can be highly increased (shop is in North Hobart's famous restaurant strip). Opportunities to also supply organic soup, rolls, drinks etc, not done yet in Hobart. Price incl all fittings, fridges, coolroom, aircon etc. Firm $130,000 (excl stock). Still 5.5 year lease to go with possibility of 3 more years. Ph: 03-6295-1159 evenings.

CARLISLE COUNTRY KNITS: All naturally coloured knitwear, yarn, fleeces & livestock. Entire business at cost of stock only. View website: www.geocities.com/carlislecountryknits/ Includes 50 purebred coloured Angora goats, majority rare moorit (brown), some silver-grey. Also incl: 165 exquisite handknits (mostly Aran & cableknits), 200 kg spun yarn + 400 kg raw, clean, fine micron fleece, business name + website. All the hard work has been done. Easily transportable. $55,000 incl GST. Ph: 02-6585-0498. Email: Jilly2@bigpond.com

PLACING AN AD?
See page 75 for details

WORK FROM HOME: Risk-free mail order, part or full time, low set-up cost, free info. Ph: 08-9537-7271.

BUSINESS FOR SALE

GYMPIE WHOLESALE RETAIL AND GROWER of greenery/foliage supplies for florists on 10 ac. Comfortable 3 b/r home, estab business 20 yrs with regular clientele. Price $695,000. Ph: 07-5483-1229.

COMMUNITIES/SHARES

TWELVE-ACRE SHARE COMPANY TITLE, residential community Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Council-approved solar-powered 3 b/r timber home in beautiful natural environment. Permanent spring water, 2-bay shed. $380,000 ONO. Ph: 07-5446-7316.

FOR SALE

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BLUE FLYER BOOKS – NEW AND USED: Gardening, rural, hobbies, history, machinery etc. Free catalogue. Ph: 07-4696-6108. PO Box 303, HIGHFIELDS, Qld 4352. Website: www.blueflyer.com.au

'NIMBIN NEWS MAGAZINE', is a cooperatively run access magazine with articles & information from Nimbin & other areas. We cover concerns relevant to alternative lifestylers & others looking for the most sustainable way. We are one of the longest running alternative magazines & the Nimbin bioregion is at the forefront in the development of sustainable systems. As networkers we scan many mags for suitable & scarce information for our readers. Subscription: 6 issues for $20, sample $3.50. Back copies 5 for $12 posted. PO Box 209, NIMBIN 2480. *Beyond the Rainbow* – literary mag. Sub: $18 per year for 6 editions. Email: nimbinnews@nrg.com.au

'NEW VEGETARIAN & NATURAL HEALTH', the magazine of the Natural Health & Vegetarian societies. Subscribe today, $30 yearly, & receive: 4 vital magazines, discounts at participating health food stores & natural therapies practitioners listed in magazine. Head Office, 28/541 High St, PENRITH, NSW 2750. Ph: 02-4721-5068.

LIKE CHOOKS OR DUCKS? You need *Starting Out With Chickens*, & *Starting Out With Ducks & Geese*. Books are paperback size, 56 pages, illustrated. Great for beginners. Buy 1 at $9.95 incl p&h or 2 for $16.95 incl p&h. Australasian Poultry, PO Box 438, SEYMOUR 3661 or ph: 03-5792-4000.

'THE MIRACLE OF MULCH' by Mary Horsfall: Mulch builds up organic matter, fertility & biodiversity in your soil for long-term garden health. *The Miracle Of Mulch* has vital mulching know-how so you can save water, save money & help the environment. Easy-to-read layout, great pics. $20 for signed copy from author, incl postage, $35 for 2. Ph: 0417-569-411, or write: Notable Products, PO Box 101, EUROA 3666.

WORLD CRISIS FORETOLD: A booklet about how the crisis began, what is ahead & what is needed to meet it. For your copy send $7 (incl p&p) to: PO Box 1041, CLEVELAND, Qld 4163.

'FOOTPRINTS' magazine for Australian Christian women. Relationships, current events, health, work, lifestyle, parenting. Nondenominational. Subs: $10/4 issues. PO Box 1962, CLEVELAND DC 4163. Free sample to GR readers. Website: www.footprints.vze.com

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PUBLICATIONS

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STONEGROUND FLOUR in-home, with a SCHNITZER German quality hand or electric stone mill, 6 models from $178. SCHNITZER MILLS, PO Box 747, KATOOMBA 2780. Ph: 02-8205-7304. Website: www.schnitzer.com.au

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TEEPEES, VIKING TENTS, medieval tents, swags, buckskin clothing. Seventeen years experience. BOJO Products, PO Box 112, AVENEL 3664. Ph: 0412-368-034, 03-5796-2753 AH. Email: bojo_products@hotmail.com Website: www.frojel.com/members/bojo

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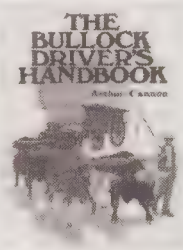

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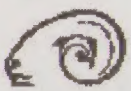

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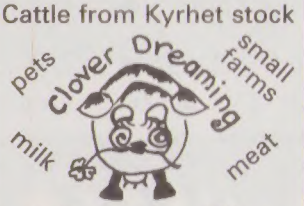

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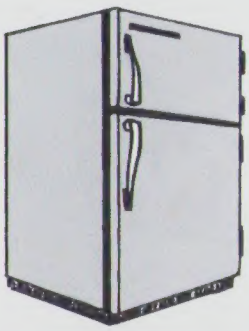

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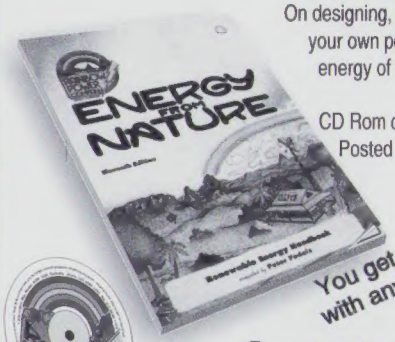

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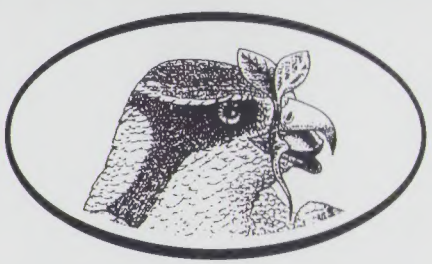

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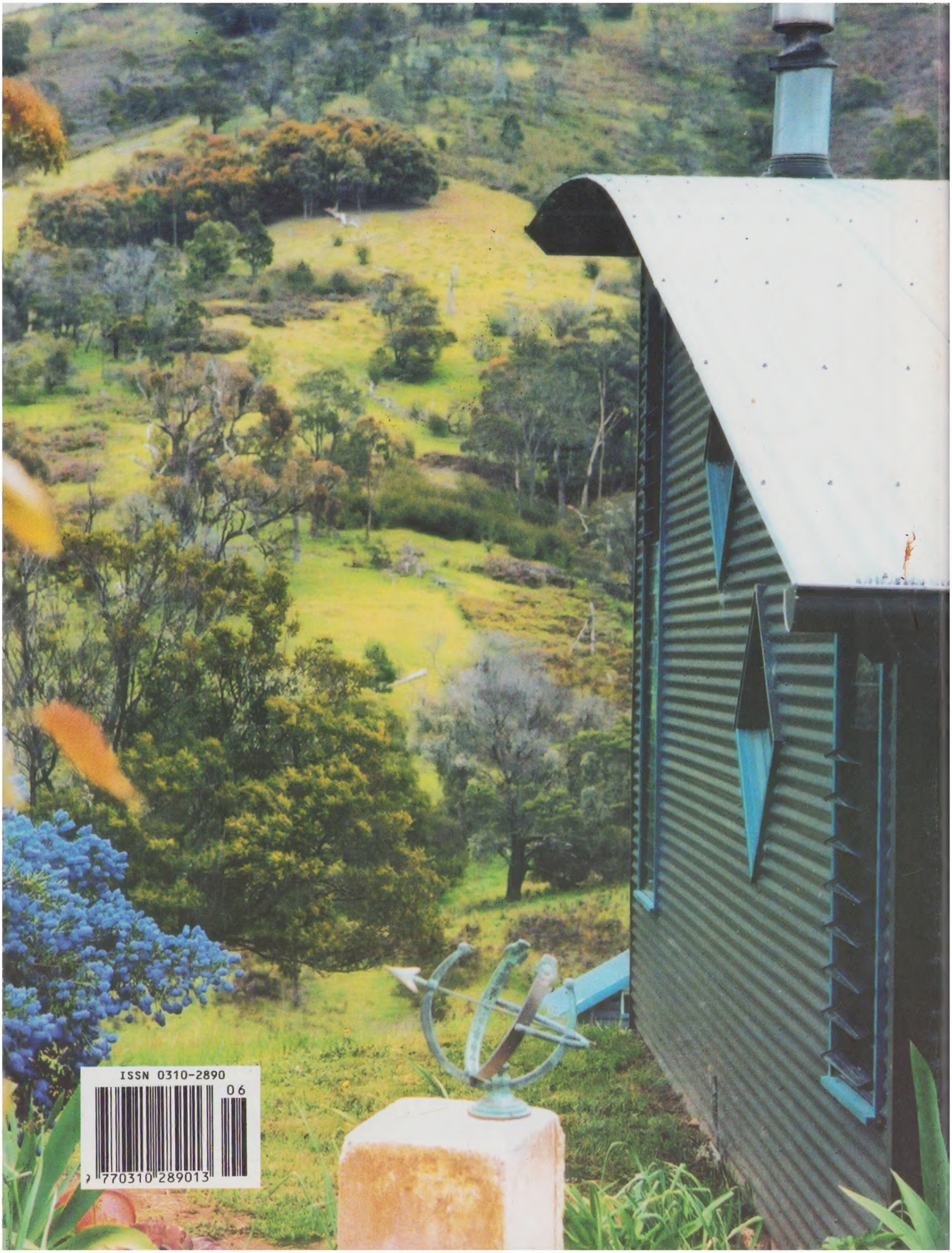
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